

The Philosophy of Freedom

I keep discovering that everyone doesn't agree as to what liberty or freedom are all about. Perhaps much of the confusion in what could be called the libertarian intellectual community arises because of a difference of definition. Of course, anyone is entitled to define his terms as he chooses. For a definition to be useful, it must identify accurately. This is particularly crucial when it comes to abstractions.

Liberty and freedom are abstract terms. To be useful, these concepts must connect to an existing or a possible human condition.

While I have attempted to define these terms for years, never before have I gone into this subject as completely as I now do in this issue of the *Journal*. I believe the explanations may prove both useful and challenging.

I wish to examine liberty with fresh eyes rather than to examine its background and the particular *locus classicus* in which the word has had meaning and utility.

For a person to have liberty in the sense that serves my purpose here, he must be able to make decisions and to act on them. That is to say, a person having liberty is not in bondage. He is not imprisoned. He may, without asking permission of another, decide to act and then act according to his decision. This excludes a number of popular usages often ascribed to the same word.

For example, a privilege granted by one person

to another is often referred to as a special kind of liberty. A privilege granted by a state is referred to as "civil liberty" or "political liberty." But these usages and meanings are peripheral. So, too, is the usage embodied in the phrase, "he took certain liberties," meaning in fact that the individual acted as though he had liberty in an area where no such liberty existed, or was intended. Then there is the "liberty" of the sailor who is on shore leave, and the "at liberty" of the actor who is unemployed.

The characteristic I wish to emphasize which relates to liberty as I intend using the word describes and identifies a natural human condition. Every human being by his own nature *is* free to decide and to act, unless or until some interference is imposed upon him, by forces outside himself. Liberty in this sense does not require a state nor does it require another person. Liberty simply is. It is implicit in the human condition.

Therefore, usages of the word liberty that imply privilege (a grant made by another person or organization); or require the existence of the state, such as political liberty or civil liberty (implying equal access to court procedures, equal treatment before the law, etc.); or relate to shore leave or unemployment, are all set aside.

The kind of liberty of which I speak would exist automatically if a person was living alone on an island. Indeed, the liberty he would experience would be so total as to preclude any usage of the

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(continued)

word. He could not be deprived of his liberty since no other person would be present to restrain him. In such a condition, the island inhabitant would surely not think in terms of liberty. Similarly, he would not think in terms of theft or of injuring others. How could theft occur if he is the only person? How could injury be inflicted on him by others, or how could he inflict injury on others? Impossible, if he is the only person. Therefore, the word liberty would have no meaning for him. Abstract terms have meanings only when contrasting conditions can be envisioned. Given total isolation, no contrast is possible.

Liberty is an abstraction denoting a natural condition, not created by other persons or organizations. This usage of the word leads to an important realization. Liberty is a social word. The word would not have been devised or conceived if all men lived lives of isolation. It came into usage because human beings live in groups. Insensibly, the word conjures up the thought that it would be ideal to live within a social condition where I, as an individual, would have the same liberty I would have in an isolated condition.

This calls for an additional realization. Liberty, although it denotes ability to choose and to act, does not denote mobility of action. Again refer to the individual living in glorious isolation. Suppose he falls and breaks a leg. In such a situation he would have lost his mobility or at least have suffered its impairment. But his liberty is unimpaired. His movements have been restricted, true. But his liberty has not been. However, if a second person had intruded, and managed somehow to inflict our isolationist with a broken leg, then the restrictions to his mobility would have been caused by another creature of the same species. In this case, not only would his mobility have been impaired, but his liberty as well.

Liberty is not lost by the imposition of accidents, elements, or members of different species. If a lion chases a person up a tree, the lion has treed the man, but the man is still at liberty. But if a man chases a person up a tree, the treed individual has been deprived of some of his liberty.

Not only is liberty a social word, it is a word denoting species. A person may find himself compelled by acts of nature to behave in certain ways rather than more preferential ways. But when a person is compelled to act in certain ways by others of his own kind, then and then only does the question of liberty emerge.

A slave has lost his liberty, not because he is working, but because a person other than himself compels him to work in certain ways and deprives him of some or all of his production. Nature demands that work must be performed or we will inadvertently die. But nature's demands do not

impose a loss of liberty. It is the unnatural demand of person or persons, imposed upon an individual by force or the threat of force, that impairs or destroys liberty.

Clearly, when a person is able to consider the realities of the situation in which he finds himself, he is called upon to use his best judgment in his own best interests and to act accordingly. Thus man qua man makes decisions. Having made them, he acts on them. This means that each person is constantly engaged in considering alternative procedures and deciding for and against various avenues. The fact that he refrains from doing certain things does not mean that he has lost his liberty. It is when others of his own kind impose on him by force or the threat of force that his liberty is impaired or vanishes altogether.

Therefore, I will define liberty as the natural ability of any human being to make decisions and to act upon them.

Freedom Defined

I find the same ambiguity of usage for the word freedom as I find for the word liberty. Freedom is sometimes used to denote a natural condition, to wit: the uncaused cause of the uses of the will by means of which human action occurs. But the same word is employed to denote a condition of privilege brought about by special permissions granted or presumed.

I am concerned only with the natural phenomenon of freedom and therefore will exclude from consideration the question of privilege or permission which must invariably imply that liberty is created by some human relationship. I wish to employ the word freedom to denote a general condition when liberty is experienced by groups of persons living in the same general area.

Thus, while liberty means that an individual has the power to decide and act on his own volition, I will use the word freedom to denote the same conditions manifesting simultaneously for all the persons in a given social unit. Thus, freedom is a condition of non-coercion. It is not merely the ability or the power of a person to act on his own volition. It is a condition wherein all persons in that particular group are uncoerced and are themselves uncoercing.

Thus, freedom is never obtained by my ability to coerce others so that I am at liberty. Freedom occurs only when I refuse to coerce others while at the same time I am not coerced.

There is a logical tendency to contrast liberty with slavery, as mutually opposing concepts. This is quite correct in the interpretation I am using. Liberty is the condition of being free insofar as an individual is concerned. Slavery is the condition of not being free as it relates to the individual.

However, freedom denotes a condition in which more than a single person is involved. Thus, the

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opposite of freedom is not slavery; it is tyranny. Freedom is a condition, and tyranny is the opposite condition. The tyrant is the enemy of freedom for he imposes tyranny and in process deprives various individuals of their liberty.

This can only mean that for a condition of freedom to emerge, or a free society to appear, tyranny must vanish. Freedom simply means the absence of coercion. It calls for the creation of a condition in which there is zero coercion.

History is full of evidence that this meaning has rarely been grasped on any broad front. All too frequently, some particular group of persons, longing for their own liberty, have presumed to impose by force on others, believing that if their "enemies" can be subdued, they will be free.

The evidence shows that this is a forlorn hope. While it is always possible for the strong to oppress the weak, the strong are not made free by oppression. Instead, the very methods of coercion they adopt inhibit their freedom. They find themselves bound to their slaves even as they bind the slaves in order to control them.

If two men join in combat and one man wins by throwing the other to the ground and pinning him there, both men are out of action. The one is held down by the other. But the one doing the holding is held down by the necessity of continuing his hold.

Thus, freedom is a condition in which no one coerces or is coerced.

I am quite certain, in setting forth these definitions, that the difficulty of obtaining a free society will be seen. But it will also become clear that unless effort is made to achieve a condition of universal liberty — freedom — someone's liberty will always be impaired. If this occurs, then freedom is lacking.

If it is true that liberty is a natural characteristic of man, then each man will sooner or later

revert to this natural characteristic. If he finds himself in a social arrangement where his liberty is lacking, he will experience frustration, resentment, and anger. This will tend to stimulate aggressive acts in which he strikes out against those who have seemingly impaired the freedom of others in that social arrangement. He will do this because his own liberty will have become important to him. This tendency to perform aggressively will lead to aberrant behavior of all sorts, including acts that at the outset are merely anti-social, and then become what are called crimes. Finally, there are larger acts of organized crime which we call rebellion, revolution, or war.

In the destruction accompanying rebellion, revolution, or war, freedom vanishes altogether.

It appears that the primary requirement by means of which we might retain our own individual liberty, and thus continue to strive for a society of free beings, is the development of a freedom philosophy. Once the philosophic factors are known and placed in a realistic framework, progress toward freedom can occur. Knowledge and understanding are the vital prerequisites. And as with all other kinds of knowledge and understanding, efforts to obtain such information about freedom must be on-going. We will never arrive at a free society in the sense that a goal has been reached and we can put aside further effort. There will be new generations to instruct; new ideas to consider; developments and refinements to be woven into the philosophy. So the search for freedom is eternal.

However, since liberty is a natural human characteristic, this search for freedom is one of the great motivational drives we all experience. Our task is to retain our own liberty in such a way that the liberty of others is not impaired and we arrive, gradually and by continuing effort, in the society of the free.





LeFevre's Journal is now in its fourth year. From the beginning, I've adopted an extremely open policy in sending it to my former students and to others who have expressed an interest in liberty. I've done this whether they offered a gift in exchange or not. It was sufficient that they

loved liberty and wanted to read more about it.

Rising costs in all areas, and most particularly postal increases, are causing me to modify this policy. Beginning with the *Winter Journal* this year (December, 1977) only those who at one time or another have sustained this effort through a gift will receive it. I'm not at all happy about this change in policy. But costs make it mandatory.

Please do not interpret this as a plea to those who have previously sent a check. If you've sent financial support only once, you're in. This is a notice to those who may have been unable or unwilling to contribute anything at all. Other contributors and I can't carry you any more. This issue and two more will emerge with the old policy in effect. Starting with December, the axe falls. So if you value the *Journal* and want to keep it coming, you'll want to provide some tangible \$\$\$\$ evidence.

THOMAS BALLOU: "What I've heard about your anarcho-pacifist philosophy intrigues me. If what I hear is correct, you oppose an individual's right to defend himself and his property by a No vote on a proposition or by the taking up of arms as our ancestors did 200 years ago. . . . Surely you can't turn your back upon the noble work accomplished by Cobden and Bright in their struggle against the poor laws and corn laws. Just because these two friends of freedom sat in Parliament, their efforts were not directed toward passing coercive legislation but rather its repeal." *First, I am not an anarcho-pacifist. Second, I'm in favor of each individual's protection of himself and his own property by any method which imposes no costs on others. I don't believe I have a right to compel you to pay for my protection.*

RANDY SIDES: "I'm surprised to find you acting in the capacity of tax collector: 'California residents add 42¢ for 6% sales tax.' Do they know they can refuse? (Perhaps any reader of *LeFevre's Journal* should be expected to know such things as a matter of course.) Indeed, paying taxes (money you have earned which is extorted from you by the government) may be a greater crime against one's fellow human beings than voting, since taxes provide the actual means by which politicians maintain control, coerce people, and suppress freedom, whereas voting merely lends an air of legitimacy to their depredations." *The government forces me to do a number of things I don't approve of doing. But it*

is bigger than I am and is armed. However, you make a good point. I can't prevent any other person from committing an act of theft because I cannot control the other person. But I can prevent myself from legitimatizing any act of theft by participating in selecting the thief of my choice.

JOHN KIDD: "In the *Cambridge Encyclopedia* I ran across a statement that startled me. The Continental Congress was held behind locked doors in secret from the people. 'It was too grave a matter for these brilliant thinkers to be interfered with by outsiders' (paraphrased). Not being satisfied with the source (British), I doubted the truth of the matter; however, I found it stated in more than one book by American authors. I'm convinced it was held in secret. Not that I could criticize your letters to Congressmen, but you never mentioned that the 'Constitution' was a 'railroad' job because 'we, the people' were not there, in fact forbidden to be present at the drawing up of the Constitution. So who can say the procedure of adopting the Constitution was not a fraud?" *The fact that the meetings were secret is not surprising and in itself does not constitute fraud. But to proclaim that the American people approved the result of these secret meetings, attended by a tiny cabal who arrogated power to themselves, is fraud.*

BEN CAMPBELL: "With the philosophy you have, it would be a utopia indeed if everyone tended to his own affairs and let everyone else do likewise. . . . May your *Journal* never cease

to give us encouragement and the will to keep the Libertarians encouraged and informed."

LEONARD RUBIN: "I believe in a limited government. Unfortunately, the government we have claims that I owe it an additional \$800 for 1974. Enclosed is a tiny check. I would have been willing to pay the government this for what it did in 1974 that I consider of positive value to me — and as a condition of having my tax reduced, to give you \$800 in appreciation for the *Journal*." *Seems fair to me.*

WILLMA BROOKS: "If I understand your 'silliness' correctly ('Caravan into Conflict'), you believe we are born into an imperfect world and are imperfect beings. And that some of us can be led to believe that we can lead others. Of course, those that follow must be deceived into giving up their individuality, to become weakened to depend on outer motivation, and to only see what their leader says he sees. Some imperfect leaders even believe they can bless their followers with wisdom and goodness. It's so easy to be exploited, and so easy to exploit. Either side, it seems to me, requires so much effort from the slaves, and so much deceit from the masters, and so much suffering to both. And for what? Duped Christians throughout the ages have been guilty of doing just what the libertarians who have fallen to using coercion by the majority are now doing, pushing beautiful truths down the throats of others. Principles to be lived must be understood, and the individual needs a desire to grow. We can't be

lumped together. We need no leaders, but we surely need to be saved from our leaders. They are so blind, it's really scary! Thanks for your *Journal*. It rings very true."

DEWEY DE FLON: "It appears that if a child must breathe on his own at once after birth, it must be self-evident that man is born free and should always take responsibility for every voluntary act of his own. I am a pacifist — opposed to war and use of force. So if you are a pacifist, Bob, I'm in good company. Re 'Render unto Caesar things that are Caesar's,' this seems to me the most misunderstood words of Christ. If Caesar had things, he took them by force and might. My interpretation is: If you believe you owe Caesar for anything, pay him. And if you believe you owe God, pay God by observing his law of love." *I've been called a "pacifist" for years. I've never called myself one. Like anyone else endowed with a spark of sanity, I favor peace over war. But I've never advocated lying down and letting others trample on me. My position is that I will oppose tyranny at every opportunity. But I propose to limit my conflict to words and ideas so that in protecting myself and my property I can never be guilty of inflicting injury on another.*

ROBERT PERRY: "I'm reading Hobbes' *Leviathan* and am constantly being drawn to remember last summer's seminar in Wichita. The striking contrast between philosophies is emphasized by the many points in which they agree. Hobbes agrees with you on the concept of value, and he also says that the first law of man's nature is that man is a profit-seeker. However, his evaluation of the carrying out of a contract is of an entirely different nature than that you give. He shows his necessity for the existence of a commonwealth from the desirability of contracts, saying that the making of a contract is not possible unless there be some power greater than the makers involved which can enforce the contract by instilling the fear of punishment within the makers for not upholding the contract. He says that a contract made in the state of nature alone is empty, that men will always violate a contract if at any time such a contract proves to not be beneficial. The state is to provide the insurance that the violation of a contract is never more beneficial than its fulfillment." *Hobbes' arguments may apply to barbarians who are unable to recognize that it's in everyone's best interest (profitable) that contracts are voluntarily fulfilled. Gov-*

ernment is an agency of violence which may be necessary for barbarians. The question is: are we ready to act like civilized beings?

MURRAY STEIN: "Would like to see your response to Ken Gray. Solzhenitsyn makes the point that if people had resisted even with crude weapons rather than being led away, the successive waves encompassing tens of millions that were taken to the Gulags might have never proceeded. The case has also been made with respect to Nazi death camps. When murder on such a massive scale is the prospect, is your doctrine of non-retaliation feasible? What happens when a society kicks over the traces making the emulation you wish to inspire and communicate merely surrender to murderous tyranny?" *You might consider the enormous effectiveness of Gandhi's resistance to tyranny.*

ROBERT FERRERA: "Your excellent *Journal* offers refreshing relief from the sentiments expressed by the liberal-conservative media. I'm a former New Left activist now convinced that libertarianism offers the best alternative to our present repressive political-economic system. . . . I feel there's a difference between a person initiating unjust aggression and a person defending himself by retaliating against it; the right to property does not give anyone the right to use his property in such a manner as is injurious to another, as the owner of the handcuffs is doing when he unjustly handcuffs another person. I also take issue with your statement (summer '76) that 'our nation is on the decline.' It's unfair to blame all the American people for the irrational, destructive acts of the statist and politicians." *I think America is on the decline. I don't think it has to be. I think it's on the decline because people are still trying to smash the other fellow's handcuffs while justifying their own use of handcuffs.*

JIM ROAF: "Just re-read your summer issue — how your 'gun fighter' friend cut you down. Could that have been one of your few off days? You say, 'He snaps them over your wrists. Do you have the right to destroy his handcuffs?' Referring back to your horse thief story of 1966, the horse is now the property of the possessor who bought it from the man who bought it from the thief. The original owner was careless, did not assume full responsibility of protection. Do I remember the lessons after all these years? Ownership has double responsibility — to protect

one's property and protect others from damage by one's property. The man was very careless, or may have been loaning or giving the handcuffs to you. He did nothing to prevent you from going to a locksmith or blacksmith and giving them to the one who removed them, or returning them, or keeping them. Or, if he did it for a joke, horseplay, then he risked the handcuffs for the anticipated pleasure." *Good point. My problem is that I'm not able to view myself as a thief.*

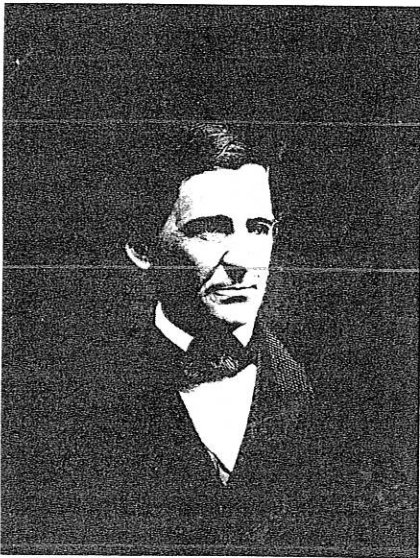
MRS. CLARENCE UHL: "You are very right — we must have inner controls if we don't want outer controls. Must say my life has been spent free in free enterprise — poultry breeding farm and hatchery with practically no controls. The Ohio Poultry Association dared me to join or quit hatching. I told them, when you raise your standards as high as mine so I will not be ashamed to belong, I will consider it. Never heard anything more."

M. WARREN KEEL: "I hope before the Lord takes me that I can arrange to return to the scenes of my childhood and early business life, and meet you in the flesh. Your exposure of self-evident truth can in the annals of time become clearer to those not chosen to expose truth and shed light. Keep on keeping on."

RALPH SMEED: "Enjoy your *Journal* and wish you lots of luck with it. Yours re the inconsistencies of politicians via their various statements was especially communicative. Your 'definition' of a libertarian was both precise and communicative (no small task, that). I do a little more homework now than I did when I was orthodox conservative. Like it or not, you've contributed a great deal to making me realize there was more that I didn't know than I had at one time realized."

BILL BEST: "How do you, as a libertarian, view the question of abortion? It seems to me that to advocate any law on the subject is to surrender to the state the decision-making process. Maybe there is no one 'position' on the subject, but as many as there are individuals and what each one decides?" *If the fetus is a human being, abortion is murder. If the fetus is a property owned by the mother, or the mother and father, the owners may dispose of it as they wish. In either case, I don't favor centralized retaliation, which is all that can come of legislative effort. Let each individual carry the burden of responsibility for his own actions, whether those actions are benign or vicious.*

MARTHA WALASHEK: "When my youngest son was in kindergarten, I inquired of his teacher as to his progress. She replied, 'Ron is just loaded with information.' I find that many of us are in the same situation, but where do we go from here? It is not for lack of informational data, but from the immensity of the material available — the sorting out process becomes an individual responsibility. Among the many benefactors to whom I am indebted, on my way toward an understanding, I find Emerson close to the top of the list. The Scottish philosopher



EMERSON

John Macmurray wrote (*The Clue to History*): 'A great deal of what passes for knowledge amongst us really consists of an elaborate, half-conscious effort to prove the falsity of what we know to be true. And the irrationality of this procedure has its source in the desire to escape from the practical consequences of admitting the truth.' It was a great pleasure several years back to come into the knowledge of Mr. LeFevre's freedom philosophy; it squares with all the great teachings. I concur with Ken Gray that 'something more is needed' and am looking forward to your ideas in this area." See *"How Can We Do It?"* page 8.

LESLIE FLEMING: "It would seem that retaliation, prevention, and protection in connection with one's property are different. I can see the futility in retaliation after one's property has been violated. I can see the value of preventing violation if humanly possible. However, I think protection of one's property lies in between and is not only an ingredient in the advancement of individual freedom but a necessary one. In the case of rape, if the act, in spite of all preventive action, is con-

summated, little is gained by retaliation. However, it seems to me there is another human element that enters if such an act is being resisted by the victim at the time another enters upon the scene. Shouldn't one, if he has the wherewithal, come to the assistance of said victim? One would surely try to save a drowning victim or an accident victim, so why not come to the aid of the victim who is battling a danger to one's property imposed by another human being? Another area that confused me was the example of handcuffs being snapped on your wrist. If someone sends an item in the mail to me without any previous arrangement, I feel title to that item has been transferred to me. If a person should come on my land that I occupy and construct an object on it without a previous arrangement, I would claim it. Similarly, if a person should thrust a hat upon my head without a previous indication of said purpose, I would assume it mine. Therefore, I think that a person who claps handcuffs upon me has transferred ownership of them unless that person has superior force to prevent me from utilizing said handcuffs in a manner that I choose. Hopefully searching for ways to avoid being the victim." *I have no objection to helping a victim after making certain the one you wish to help is, in fact, a victim; also making certain, while helping, that you do not inflict injury. If ownership of the handcuffs has been transferred to me, then of course I may do with them as I please. But again, care must be used. What if a thief stole a hat and then clapped it on my head? Would it belong to me? The same question might be asked respecting the receipt of something through the mail.*

LONNI LEES BROOKER: "We met at a writer's seminar and I've thoroughly enjoyed your *Journal* ever since. In this last issue I found sentences that were isolated gems of pure philosophic genius! The more I read of you, the less I find to disagree with. Even when I do disagree, I admit you are morally right . . . but not practical. But being a creature of principle and ever the champion of lost causes, I fear some day I may be 100% in your camp! I admire you and your perseverance greatly."

VIRGINIA STONE: "It was my privilege to hear you lecture once, years ago, and to visit with you and hear your wife sing — a totally enjoyable evening. My time is limited for extended reading so I enjoy this 'capsule thought bomb' so well presented in

your *Journal*. Please keep it coming."

DAVID ARGALL: "What consistency you have is obtained only by a fantastic definition of violence. Indeed, your definition is so wide that I can't conceive of any human activity or inactivity that is not violence under it. It's violence when I vote No, you can't raise my taxes? Then it's violence when I say No, I won't buy your goods. It's violence when I vote to repeal a law that should have never been on the books? Then it's violence when I quit my job. All I'm doing is saying No to somebody." *Violence occurs when another person's boundaries are physically violated against his will. This does not mean saying No. When you participate in voting, regardless of the direction of your vote, you are approving of majority rule; the larger number will impose its will by force on the smaller number, however the voting goes. When you refuse to buy a particular good, no boundary is violated. The seller has no proprietary interest in your money and/or actions and therefore is not injured when you refuse to patronize. When you quit a job, assuming you do not violate a contract in so doing, you're doing violence to no one. You are merely exercising your right to say either Yes or No.*

W. FREEMAN GARVIN: "It shudders me to think that had I not visited a then bedfast fellow 'letter to the editor' writer (who proved he could land his plane in a big hole), I might now be thumping for the 'conservatives,' or, with a little less awareness of That Which Is, even for the 'Libertarian Party.' I shall hope you'll continue sending me your 100% perfect *Journal* for the enclosed % of its real worth."

EDWARD UNDERWOOD: "So many of us fail to deserve what we are receiving, demand more than we are producing, and are failing to get along with each other to the extent we are asking for oppressive government. A partial escape would be to 'take to the woods.' There is no easy way to regain liberty without changing human nature and the impulses which always have and probably always will lead people to neglect liberty in favor of being cared for though it costs more than is produced. I venture to suggest that if we were made free it would again be lost through lack of appreciation." *Freedom is never attained in the sense that we can put it on the shelf and walk away to do something else. The price of liberty is eternal effort. It is never fait accompli.*

RAYMOND HALL: "Your thunder-

ing activity in the political arena while proclaiming your dedication to non-activity ('Caravan Into Conflict') and your seeking converts to your political philosophy, as evidenced by your seeking an audience — who, incidentally, you hope will applaud you ('Sound of Cheering') — is anything but new or original. Democritis (c. 420 B.C.) dialogued the same consonant inconsistency. Actually, I admire your dedication to the search for something. I really doubt that you truly know what that something is. My comment should not deter your determination. Nor your efforts. It's sometimes prudent to seek a mirror before going on stage." *Raymond Hall, with an assist from Democritis, demonstrates the art of contrary thinking by asserting what was not asserted and proclaiming what was not proclaimed.*

DOUGLAS SOLOMON: "We don't always agree (I tend to wish to react with violence when intimately involved in such; involuntarily so, to the best of my abilities), but what I read has value, so here's my check." *Thanks.*

JOHN GNATEK: "Re the politician with a social conscience, Mencken felt it was preferable to be cheated by a common thief than to be rolled by a self-styled savior. He defined an idealist as 'one who on noticing that a rose smells better than a cabbage, concludes that it will also make better soup.' — from article in *History Today*, Jan. '76, by David Mitchell."

LOUISE MILLER: "I was quite amused that you placed my one-line comment among all those profound statements. I do enjoy your *Journal*. The articles offer much food for thought. Isn't that what it's all about?"

HAROLD GRAHAM: "Your thoughts if applied would bring forth those fruits that Jesus of Nazareth proclaimed would exist on the New Earth. But as He also said, these things cannot be, as long as there is amongst mankind the emotions of hate, envy, greed, self-righteousness, etc. We do have these emotions — alive and/or dormant to some extent in most of us . . . so the only hope of man is, the experience and wisdom of its elders, applied as a lubricant and salve. At our age (I'm approaching my 70th year) we seem to mellow somewhat in venting such emotions and realizing our time is limited."

JOHNSTON LOWE: "There's something in your philosophy that confuses me, seems to be missing. Not something that would necessarily be inconsistent with your ideas but which

would relieve many of your otherwise ardent followers who feel one should not allow himself to be taken advantage of sitting down. . . . I agree with your ideas, but I don't want to be run roughshod over either." *If I start to run roughshod over you, please let me know. I don't want that to happen.*

EDWARD HAVEY: "Your point of view regarding the Libertarian Political Party was very well done. I also can sympathize with the frustration and the resultant political activities in which a person will participate because I did it myself, years ago. It was as you indicate, mere folly."

LOIS SARGENT: "It would be splendid if we could get along without government, but unfortunately we are not angels. You and I may be able to behave properly because we were brought up right, but how about the thousands (millions?) of today's young people who have not had disciplinary training as they grew up? Also, in advocating no government, have you considered the psychological effect? Many people who obey the laws might yield to temptation if there were no deterrent. Too many take a chance as it is — shoplifting, etc. We can throw off the Frankenstein monster of encroaching bureaucracy, which now threatens our freedom, only if we reduce government, by legislation, to its logical function: that of local police protection and national defense. We can recapture complete freedom only if we accept full responsibility for ourselves as individuals." *If so many are potentially evil, it follows that we cannot afford government. It's easier to deal with evil in a private person than to deal with evil in a person who holds power.*

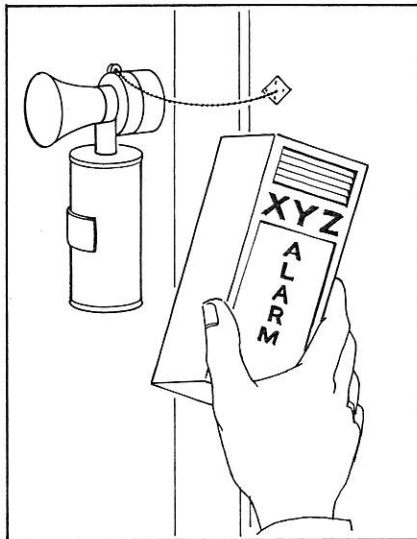
DORIS GORDON: "There's a limit to the extent of a person's rights: non-

initiation of aggression. When a person steps over that limit, he wrongfully deprives another of a value. Justice decrees that he thereby acquires a debt to the victim and, therefore, his victim has acquired a claim on him. The aggressor has no right to claim immunity from that debt since Justice demands that the victim has the right to have restored to him that which was wrongfully taken away but which is still his by right. If, according to you, the victim has no right to use force to regain what is his, he has been forced to make a 'gift' of that to his aggressor. A debt that need not be paid off is no longer a debt, but a gift. In that case, no one can be considered to be a victim nor anyone an aggressor. This is clearly not the case." *Every act which violates a property boundary physically against the will of the owner is a wrongful act. Two wrongful acts do not make a rightful act. I agree to the desirability of having the wrongdoer make restitution. But I deny the validity of forcing a person to do right. To use force to compel right is a wrong in itself.*

BOB RICHARDSON: "I read your article about 'To Sell an Unpopular Idea' with much interest. Instead of an unpopular idea, couldn't it be better stated as an idea which would be most popular if understood? If so, understanding is the problem and *there is no other problem.*"

GRACE HESS: "It takes less than one hand to count the other sources that I read that can approximate in clarity the fine-pointed reasoning that I find in your *Journal*. It's a treat to meet a mind so uncluttered by the crud that distorts and hampers most thinking."

SANDRA JEFFRIES: "Thanks so much for shedding so much more light on those little-known facts that help to make our libertarian philosophy more cohesive. We're enjoying the *Journal* almost as much as our seminars at Freedom School. Isn't it interesting that as conditions — political, economic, et al. — get worse, more individuals are surfacing? Too much pap makes even the gluttons for punishment regurgitate. Re protection, the government (here in Portland) is interfering in the most mild of prevention devices: burglar alarms. They've practically admitted they can't prevent crime, they've put up booths to display good locks and burglar alarms, they've especially encouraged buying burglar alarms, and *now* there's an \$8 license fee for them (\$25 for businesses). Cute?" *Real cute.*



HOW CAN WE DO IT?

Since I have repeatedly opposed the belief that one can advance the cause of liberty by political action, I have been asked on several occasions for an outline of the practical steps to be taken outside the political arena. How do we move from where we are to where we would like to be if we don't rely on politics?

My recommendation is based on my analysis of the nature of man. If man is a living being endowed with the ability to make decisions and to act on them, then the method employed to improve the human situation must take that fact into account. My analysis says that man is a self-controlling being.

How are people controlled? Each person controls himself. Each controls his own mind and his own body. Liberty is the natural ability of each individual to act on his own volition.

Can a person be controlled by some other method? Actually, no. All men are subject to persuasion, argument, pleading, influence, and so on. But no one *must* accede to the wishes of another. Even if a person is told to do a certain thing or die, reality teaches us that the person can still refuse. Under certain conditions, an individual may prefer to die rather than obey. Indeed, the primary cause of the violence that men exhibit toward each other is the direct result of their lack of ability to control each other. If one person could control the other, there would be little reason to interfere by physical violence.

If we seek a free society, or freedom, we must seek to establish a human situation in which the natural power of the individual to control himself will not be interfered with by physical violence. In short, we seek a condition in which all men will experience liberty.

The reason that people resort to force, or the threat of force, in dealing with each other is that the other party does not do what the first party wishes him to do. Force is threatened or used as a *motivational*, not a control, factor.

When I have tried to persuade another, by all reasonable avenues open to me, and I am still met with refusal, I have only two possible avenues open. I can cease my efforts. Or I can become unreasonable. I can put reason aside and resort to force or the threat of force.

Reduced to simplicity, there are two motivational factors and only two. Remember, you control yourself. But to get you to control yourself in a way that pleases me, requires that I (1) offer you a gain if you comply — the carrot; or (2) offer to injure you if you don't comply — the stick.

All political systems rely on the stick. Do as you're told, or suffer. Only the market place offers

gain (the carrot) as the motivational factor. A society in which each member experiences liberty will require the abandonment of the stick method and total reliance upon the carrot method.

Why is this necessarily true? Because the victim who experiences the stick wielded by another loses some of his freedom. Additionally, the party wielding the stick has been diverted from his principal objectives and is wasting time and energy on punitive matters. Thus, although he is still acting volitionally, the stick wielder has injured himself by choosing a secondary rather than a primary course of action.

What if the carrot method doesn't work? The *only* alternative within the context of freedom is to leave the individual alone to his own pursuits.

With this in mind, how do we move toward greater freedom in our society? Only by influence and persuasion, entailing the use of reason. The moment we become frustrated and begin to rely on force or the threat to use force (implicit in political processes), we have abandoned our objective and to some degree are reducing the amount of freedom.

The very first requirement, then, if we sincerely wish to achieve a greater measure of freedom, is intellectual. We must not only establish the goal but we must understand the nature of the goal. And we must be correct, in the sense that our definitions correspond to reality; either a reality that exists or a reality that can be brought into existence.

So far as I can determine, many libertarians have not as yet taken this first step. While it is true that most of those who speak up for liberty are intellectually involved, many of them are cringing before the onslaught of the anti-intellectuals who carp at virtually all intellectual activities.

The anti-intellectuals criticize the libertarian as a person who spends a great deal of time discussing ideas; in debating and probing the subject. Those who are uncomfortable in this area constantly tell me, "You've got to come up with a program of action or we won't have any libertarians left." "We want to DO something." "Don't give us all these theories, tell us what to do."

Another complaint is that "libertarians are completely impractical. They accept a principle or two and lose touch with the real world. They've got to get out of their ivory towers and come to grips with reality." "We need action!"

So libertarians are prone to get involved in politics, or they shoot off on scores of tangents of greater or lesser merit, with few holding the main thrust of freedom in the center of their objectives.

Or as another alternative, they isolate themselves in disgust.

Thus, I find many fine people whose major concern is opposing the I.R.S. Or I find those whose principal concern is obtaining the legalization of drugs; or special laws respecting the status of women; or justice for the American Indian. Some become primarily concerned with repeal of the income tax. Some seek to champion the concept of atheism. Some wish to promote certain psychological theories. The bulk of those calling themselves libertarians are pursuing their own individual ends, each more or less worthy in itself. But who speaks up for liberty as a primary goal? Who puts liberty at the top of his scale of values?

To move from a controlled society, taxed, regimented, and stultifying, into a great new world of human liberty requires a revolution. But the revolution is one of thought, not of guns and bombs. What is required is for people to *think differently* than they presently do in respect to human relationships.

John Adams, after a lifetime of service first to the Colonial and then to the early Constitutional cause, had what to me is a remarkable insight that might apply today. In a letter to Hezekiah Niles dated February 13, 1818, and commenting on the American rebellion against Britain, Adams wrote: "The (American) Revolution was effected before the war commenced. The Revolution was in the hearts and minds of the people. . . . This radical change in the principles, opinions, sentiments, and affection of the people was the real revolution. . . ."

It took Adams a lifetime to realize that the importance of the decades through which he had lived was not the number of battles, the casualties, the war itself, but rather the change that had come in the way people thought; in their affections, opinions, and sentiments.

They had moved from believing in the divine right of kings to a position in which they believed in the equal rights of man. Unfortunately, this great intellectual attainment was quickly lost in a new wave of dependence upon a centralized state — not a king, but an all-powerful state, nonetheless.

The libertarian revolution, as I see it, must achieve that same objective. We must have a change in the sentiments, opinions, and affections of the people themselves. How is that brought about? Clearly, the task is one that involves education.

Once a significant number of persons become convinced that we are dealing with an intellectual revolution rather than a political or military one, the practical steps to be taken reveal themselves.

When the individual sees through this problem clearly, he himself takes action. He does so by hitching his activities to that blazing comet of freedom speeding across our skies. How does he do

this? He studies, learns, and communicates. And if his studies and his learning are incomplete (as must be for all of us), he begins the process of communicating what he does know.

The more you try to explain ideas to others, the more the others will challenge and correct you. A teacher is no more than an active student.

To whom does he communicate? It really doesn't matter. The whole world is his artichoke. Logical starting places are with his own children, spouse, and friends who evince an interest. The job is not to persuade others to his opinion. The job is to encourage the others to formulate their own opinions in harmony with the reality of human liberty. The person who convinces himself remains convinced. The person who is persuaded by another can be re-persuaded later on. It is better to work a year or two with a single person until that person convinces himself than to labor in an effort to sway thousands.

What are the tools that will be most useful? They are the tools of education: the books, the films, the blackboards and chalk, the classroom — the log shared between someone eager to learn and someone eager to let him learn.

The school and the church can provide the proper climate and tools. To be effective, however, both school and church ought to be outside the conventional groves of academy or ordination. There is such a vested interest in most established institutions of learning and communication that the most skilled communicators will be more concerned with defending and enhancing their credentials or personal reputations than in blazing a revolutionary trail.

Years ago, I accepted as a personal motto: "The man who knows what freedom means will find a way to be free." In short, I cannot "organize" a free society. Freedom emerges as the natural result of men working together in liberty when we stop "organizing" a free society.

Within the existing society, what we organize are specific units of production and distribution. We learn to support ourselves, pay our own bills, and champion the cause of liberty by consistent advocacy. As others glimpse the merit, they, one by one, join the effort. They do not have to join each other. They enlist in the *concept*.

From this procedure there can be no backlash. More and more persons, self-motivated and self-controlled, simply stop engaging in the existing social devices which impose on others. They break their ties with the existing political structures; not by violence, not by trying to obtain majorities or by using force, but by understanding and then thinking differently about the whole area of human relationship.

I know of no other practical method for moving from where we are to where at least some of us can see new hope and light.



LEVELS OF UNDERSTANDING

It has long been the practice of scholars, in their search for understanding, to subdivide phenomena into various classifications. The method is sound. The human mind has its limits. The brain is an exceptionally good piece of equipment, but its function is limited. We do not grasp everything at once. We consider one item at a time.

In order to deal with the subject of liberty or freedom so as to comprehend what it means to be free, I am going to divide all phenomena into three categories: the objective, the subjective, and the conjunctive.

The Objective Order

The objective order will contain those items which exist in reality. Indeed, reality might be considered a useful term to describe the objective. Anything that is real, that exists in fact, belongs to the objective order. For it to be objective, it must have independent existence. It is. Whether it is visible or invisible does not qualify it. Whether it is tangible or intangible does not qualify it. But does it exist in itself? If the answer is affirmative, we are dealing with something that is objective.

It doesn't matter whether we like the objective item, whether we value or do not value it. It doesn't matter whether it is beneficial or dangerous; healthful or destructive.

We could look at it another way. If nature has produced it, it is part of objective reality. Unfortunately, this is not all-inclusive. There are a host of items which are man-made that are also real and objective. Land is objective and nature has provided it. But man-made buildings erected on the land also exist in fact and are of the objective order. So both land and buildings are objective. They exist in the real world.

What is important to recognize, in order to comprehend the usefulness of the term objective, is that whether the item is made by nature or by man, if it has independent existence *outside of the mind of the person*, then it is real and has objective existence.

There is a school of thought which stresses the fact that if a person is not aware of the existence of a given item of reality (something in the objective order), then that item doesn't exist insofar as he is concerned. Technically, this is true. But describing the phenomenon in this manner leads to a completely erroneous expression if not conclusion, e.g., that the discovery of the item has in fact brought it into existence insofar as the observer is concerned. What the discovery actually did was to bring it into the area of awareness of the individual. Neither the observer nor the act of discovery created it. It had been there all the time.

Let me provide an example. A few years ago,

men went into space and circled the moon. Thus, for the first time, a view of the side of the moon that is away from the earth was afforded. What they saw had been there all the time. Their voyage did not create the far side of the moon. Of course it is quite true that until such time as the far side of the moon came under observation, no one had seen it. Therefore, no one had from first-hand observation any proof that there actually was a reverse side. Until that time, all concepts of what was on the far side were conjectural, although it was a relatively safe inference that a far side was there. But with the first moon orbit, conjecture and inference were firmed up by a visual perception of reality.

But the spacemen did not create the far side. Nor do any of us create reality. Even when we build a building, we make it out of things that already exist in reality. Man is not a creator in an original objective sense. He uses the building blocks which nature provides, to change the natural form in order to understand or to use. But man does not create the building blocks.

To discover that something exists is not the same as bringing it into existence. Mankind's voyage through life is a voyage of discovery, not a voyage of creativity. What is, *is*.

The Subjective Order

The subjective order, on the contrary, exists in the mind. Further, it is reserved to the mind, and for our purposes it is reserved to the human mind.

This is not intended to downgrade or to deny the considerable thinking powers that a number of mammals other than man may have. My concern is with the liberty and freedom of man, not that of porpoises, dogs, horses, or cats. So I am arbitrarily limiting this study to the area of subjectivity found in the human mind. I am not speaking of the brain. The brain is objective. It is a physical organ usually existing in the skulls of mammals, but also present in other species.

Reason is a phenomenon that emerges in the human brain. The brain is objective. It exists. But reason, which is not the same thing as the brain, exists at a level other than the objective. Man is a reasoning creature. He acts because he has a reason to act. The reason may not be a good one from an observer's point of view, but each acting person has a reason for doing what he does.

The point I wish to make here is that man, endowed with a brain, uses that organ to create a sensory world of his own. That separate world of the senses is usually called the mind. And reason, whether it is used well or poorly, is the method employed by means of which a mind emerges. The mind is subjective. It does not exist in the real

world — it does not have existence independent of its creator — and is therefore subjective.

When man works with the objective world, he uses his hands and his muscles. But in order to know how to work with the objective world, he uses the processes of reason, by means of which he memorizes, formulates opinions, establishes his order of priorities, directs his attention toward goals he wishes to achieve, creates a scale of values, and acts. Thus, reason, memory, opinion, order of priorities, attention, and value are all subjective. They do not exist in the real or objective world. They comprise and exist only in the mind. If all human minds were destroyed, there would be no reason, no memory, no opinion, no priorities, no attention, and no values.

Perhaps the following analogy will help to illustrate the difference between objective and subjective. Let me suppose that I have a camera with perfect lens and high-quality film and that the setting I have chosen is perfect in terms of composition, lighting, and so on. I operate the shutter and as I do so, *an impression* will be received by the sensitive plate in my camera. If all the factors were correct, the picture I obtain will be an accurate reproduction of the scene I photographed.

What the camera picks up is an *image* of reality. The image can be accurate, but it is an image only. If the objective world weren't there, the camera would have nothing to photograph. But the camera does not give me reality. There is no way I can put the setting I chose to photograph into the camera. All that the camera is designed to do is to receive an impression. I receive that impression later as a photographic print. The setting I "shot" would still be outside the camera.

The mind works the same way, except that it does not constantly produce positive or even negative print-outs. The print-outs would be objective. The impressions received by the mind and then used by it, remain impressions and they are invariably subjective. The mind can pick up accurate impressions. But they are impressions only. It is out of these impressions that the mind is formulated. These formulations, whether accurate or not, comprise the sensory world of each individual. No two are alike for each person creates his own sensory world. And these sensory worlds are not objective. They exist only in the mind and could not exist if the mind were destroyed. Therefore, every formulation that is created by the mind and becomes a part of the mind, is subjective and not objective.

The Cojunctive Order

The third classification I am calling the cojunctive. It is the joining together of the objective and the subjective. This is best seen by discussing principle.

The term, principle, can be misleading. This is

true because we have commonly used the word to denote a number of different things. I wish to use it in the sense of mechanical or automatic predictability. Thus, when we understand the characteristics of certain substances, we can put them together and obtain a predictable result. A simple example is this. If we take a small amount of water, put it in a container, and expose it to intense heat, the water will boil. If the process continues, the water will turn into steam. This is predictable. Therefore, we know the principle of converting water to vapor.

The process itself is objective. The water does not vaporize because a human being wants it to vaporize but because the person cooperates with the natural characteristics of water and heat. When a person understands these properties, he can obtain a predictable result. It follows that the application of a principle contains the element of the objective — the true nature of water and heat — plus the knowledge (subjective) of how those characteristics interact.

Thus, when reality (objective) is understood (subjective) and put together, we have a third order (cojunctive).

Life is only possible in an orderly universe in which predictability to some degree is possible. Actually, most of us are aware of many principles without thinking about them as being principles. What this means is that we live in a world where there is such a thing as cause and effect, and we

(please turn the page)

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LEVELS OF UNDERSTANDING

(continued)

learn what to expect.

We enter a building for the first time. It usually doesn't occur to us to check to see whether we will walk on the ceiling or the floor. We are predicting (insensibly) that we will walk on the floor. It's a safe prediction under "normal" circumstances.

We climb into a motor vehicle, put the ignition key in the lock, and activate the mechanism. We do it automatically. It is because the people who manufacture automobiles have built predictability into them. True, each vehicle performs more or less well in terms of that predictability. There are minor variables. But we do not apply the brake when we wish the windows to open. Nor do we step on the gas when we want to turn right.

This is true with most of the things we do. We cook food because cooking breaks down the fibers and supplies heat to what we have chosen to eat. If we got an unpredictable result, we would stop cooking.

If you operated a light switch on Monday and the lights turned on, but on Tuesday when you worked the same switch the floor caved in, and on Wednesday banana trees thrust their branches through the windows, you would probably stop operating the switch. You wouldn't be able to predict what was going to happen next.

In reality we are alive on this planet because

we have learned the principles of how thousands of things work. We know that if we plant wheat, we will grow a wheat crop if we grow anything. There is no certainty that anything will grow; but if it does, it will be wheat and not a flock of camels.

Indeed, we are so accustomed to predictability that the human emotional system does not handle non-predictability well except when it can predict the unpredictable. When something happens that is totally unexpected and, at the same time, frightening, we go into shock. Shock is so serious that it can be fatal.

The processes of living require that we observe reality (the objective), formulate impressions about reality in our minds (subjective), and then put both together accurately enough so they work (conjunctive).

When we are dealing with reality, there are only three possible outcomes. Where we have certainty of outcome, we have predictability. This we call principle. When we do not know enough, yet at the same time have some information, we develop, usually with the aid of mathematics, what we call probability. Beyond predictability and probability, all we have left is possibility.

The more we can successfully enter the conjunctive area, where principles are understood and applied, the more successfully we will live our lives. And the more certainly will we move in the direction of having liberty for ourselves and freedom for mankind.



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