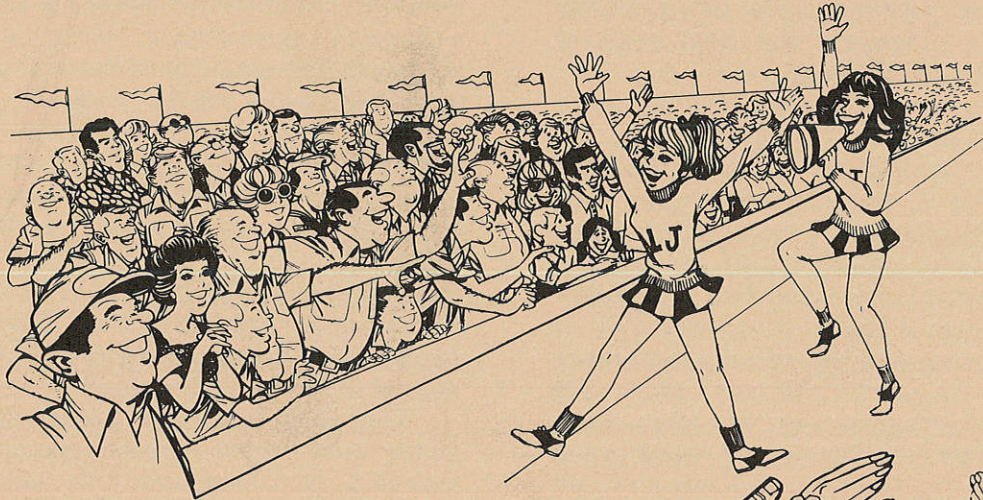




the man who knows what freedom means will find a way to be free

## THE SOUND OF CHEERING



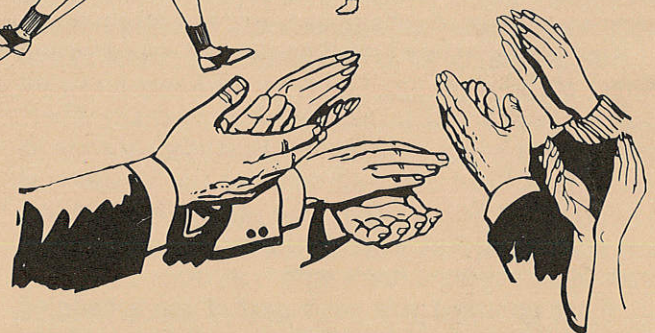
I suppose everyone has the desire to be popular. I've had the desire, off and on, for years. Further, there have been periods when the desire was met with corresponding success. In my own case, popularity has been as inconstant as the moon, increasing and waning in turn.

In college I was president of my class, achieving high acclaim, and then I blew it by getting married. When I went into radio, as one of the nation's first radio "milkmen" my fan mail was prodigious. Then I became interested in theology and philosophy and became a crashing bore on the air. Funny thing was, I didn't care. I wanted to be liked, of course, but I followed my own interests and my fans could whistle for someone more amusing.

Years later, back on the air somewhat wiser than before, I once more became a "popular personality," setting up a Freedom Club and a Breakfast Club and making many worthwhile friends. But I felt the need to learn more about liberty and followed my own star.

When I founded the Freedom School and watched it grow into Rampart College, I became one of the most active and useful libertarians, and my writing as editorial chief at the *Gazette Telegraph* during the same period brought me many friends who had similar leanings.

But that strange quirk which downgrades applause, even though I often revel in it, appeared again. Once more I tossed the plaudits aside in favor of my own view of liberty. Curiously, in this case, the pendulum swung all at once. I was aware at the time that it was about to swing. A visible shift loomed and I knowingly chose the lonely trail.



Perhaps if I tell the story, something of value may be found in my experience.

Whenever anyone studies liberty, he learns that government is the most viable device yet conceived which is capable of destroying liberty. The liberals recognize that governments make war, intrude on the private lives of individuals, and demand conformity in utterly idiotic ways that erode one's personal freedom. The roots of liberal thinking are in that understanding of liberty.

Conversely, the conservatives are also concerned with the intrusion of government. They, too, wish to be free. But theirs is an economic approach based on the right of an individual to own and manage his own property. Thus, the conservative is quite ready to wage war, seeing it as a tool in defense of his freedom to own property.

Here we have two doctrines, each one rooted in liberty; but adherents on each side are quite willing to erode the other fellow's liberty. The liberal constantly attacks the concepts of property ownership and property rights, but upholds the right of a person to escape military service and to live his own private life. The conservative constantly attacks any "misconduct" on the part of those who will not conform, but upholds the right of a person to own as much property as he can honestly acquire.



## THE SOUND OF CHEERING

(continued)

To be a useful doctrine, the libertarian position must bring these two warring factions into harmony and alliance. To bring these positions together, it is essential that a position be taken which is 100 percent in favor of liberty and 100 percent opposed to tyranny. Thus, the enemy of the libertarian is the tyrant, the authoritarian, the individual who is willing to impose, by force, upon the life style or the property of another.

The interfacing between these two positions should be, in my judgment, the focal point of libertarian thought and action.

Unfortunately, we are all human, and as human beings we are all prone to err. Further, we are prone to err on the basis of our emotional likes and dislikes. Fears, hopes, loves, and hates move us. Among those most readily swayed by emotion are those who claim to be moved only by reason. The emotional intensity of those contending that reason is their highest value is readily conspicuous.

A number of years ago, I attended a conference in Philadelphia. As memory serves, about 275 persons, mostly of college age, were in attendance.

One young man whom I knew well was a prime mover of the meeting. The reason I knew him well was because I had introduced him to many libertarian ideas when he had come to study with me at Rampart. I liked him and admired the intellectual potential that he revealed. Like others, his problem was emotional. But when is that a crime? All of us wish to be popular, don't we?

What occurred was not a part of the scheduled program. Further, I had it in my power to demur and to refuse to participate when he suddenly called upon me to state my position on retaliation so that he could emerge as my adversary.

Interestingly, I had immediate insight as to what he proposed doing. He was going to do his best to tear my views apart. He was going to try to win fame and acclaim by cutting me down. He would gain in stature if he could make me look smaller.

My position which relates to the interfacing alluded to above — to the use of force inflicted by some upon others — has been carefully thought out. However, it is an extremely difficult point to explain. Almost anyone's fears and emotions get in the way. To lay the groundwork takes the presentation of a series of syllogisms and probably at least an hour of time. Even that may not suffice unless considerable study in respect to the meaning of liberty has already been devoted by those hearing the explanation.

Thoughts of early gun fighters filled my mind as I went to the platform. I had won a reputation as a pretty fast man with my intellectual bullets. I had lived by that gun and now, as in the horse opera, I was to be tested by a youngster who had every-

thing to gain and nothing to lose in seeking to show he was faster on the draw.

And he was ready. "What would you do," he asked, "if someone put handcuffs on you? Your position is that violating property boundaries against the will of the owner is always wrong. The man who puts the handcuffs on you owns the handcuffs. But he snaps them over your wrists. Do you have the right to destroy his handcuffs?"

Several ideas immediately flashed as to how I could evade and thus avoid the showdown. Certainly, I was entitled to choose my ground: to make a thorough explanation or, to carry out the analogy of the gun fighters, to make certain that we were on equal footing and equally prepared.

Instead, that strange quirk of character I have mentioned rose to the surface. He had the drop on me, and I knew it. If I remained true to my position, I would not be understood. I decided that it was better to remain true and be misunderstood than to cavil, compromise, or lie. Any of those actions could have made me popular. Instead, I said, and without explanation, "I have no right to destroy the property of the owner."

What could readily be predicted occurred. The young man gained audience support and I was ridiculed. Not long ago, this same young man reportedly asserted that it is all right to lie to advance the cause of liberty, so he could not have objected had I lied on this occasion. But I have never been able to see the advantage of lying — except as a device to win popularity, possibly while running for office; certainly, while trying to be liked. The public often warms to a liar. I suppose there is a *simpatico*, a kind of brotherhood, that exists subliminally in the lie, so many do so much lying. People seem to like to be conned. That is, if it is artfully done.

But it is clear to me that this interface between the two factions is the single point that must be resolved. The liberal sees violence as justified when he opposes war and large profits. The conservative justifies violence to protect himself or his property. But when violence ensues, its only function is to violate the boundaries of the other party either in his person or property. And when boundaries are violated, freedom vanishes.

The person who places freedom at the apex of his values recognizes that rights are unalienable over each individual's life and property. He also sees that freedom is a state of non-coercion. Freedom is absent if A attacks B, in the same way that it vanishes when B attacks A.

In addition, the lover of freedom sees that he has no way at all of inhibiting the action of another unless by force or the threat of force. The best he can do is to control himself. Most of us do this fairly well when we are not provoked. But when provocation comes, whether in the form of taxes, handcuffs, or guns, or the threat of any of them, then we

rationalize our position, see ourselves as being "in the right" and the other fellow "in the wrong," and consequently we tend to suppose that violence employed in defense, retaliation, or punishment is warranted.

Still, it is true that anyone can cause freedom to disappear. Each of us is always physically capable of taking away the freedom of another. Curiously, we cannot make the other free, but we can certainly interfere with his freedom. The libertarian whom I admire sees all these things and resolves not to be a cause in the loss of liberty.

The man who puts handcuffs on me has interfered with my liberty. If he is bigger than I am, he can probably get away with it (see government). But does this action give me the right to do the same to him that he has done to me? Not if I value freedom, as a thing in itself. True, if I value *myself* enough, I may at this juncture say, "Never mind about freedom. What good is it when I am not free? Therefore, I will do anything to regain my freedom, no matter who gets hurt."

And that is precisely the position of all political actionists, liberal, conservative, or even those nominally libertarian.



But let me take this exposition a little further. If a man invariably has the right to use violence against others when attacked, consider this. A attacks a friend of B's and kills him. B decides that A must be apprehended, tried, convicted, and punished. This is, in fine, the justification for *all* government.

But wait. A has a right to defend himself no matter what. So as B tracks down A in order to bring him to account, it could not be wrong for A to kill B. Perhaps A was wrong when he killed the friend of B. But since he has a right to defend himself against any and every danger, no matter what, then it follows that any attempt to apprehend him for trial and punishment must violate his right to survive. Therefore, A can kill B *rightfully*. Also, he can kill C, D, E, and F if they come against him. All these killings are justified on the grounds that a man always has the right to use ultimate force to defend himself.

Against this argument, those using it sometimes resort to lengthy debate over the nature of rights. In the end, they often say that a man loses his rights when he does a wrongful act.

The concept of rights which I support is the one enunciated in the Declaration of Independence. However imperfectly those early scholars acted out their own doctrine, they had the temerity to suggest that all men have equal and unalienable rights. If, indeed, rights are to be viewed as the moral base upon which all men stand, irrespective of their wisdom, their education, their breeding, or their money, then as a logical concomitant rights must be equal and unalienable. For if rights are equal, at least at the outset, then if a man can lose a right because of bad conduct, from that moment forward, rights would never be equal again. If one man loses a right, the rights of others will be larger.

Should this doctrine of losing rights appeal, then we are left with the interesting view that rights arise out of human conduct. It would follow then that there is no moral base whatever. A man's rights would depend upon his breeding, his judgment, his financial condition, or a host of other variables. That leaves us with situational ethics in which a man has rights only when and if he behaves in accordance with the wishes of others. And that is all that is necessary to form a giant collective, either liberal or conservative (or both, if we have two collectives). Further, it is all that is needed to create a society of privilege and not of rights.

This is the interface. If I have a right to attack the man who attacks me, then he has as much right to kill me, since I am attacking, as he perhaps thought he had when he attacked me. Here we have an uncomfortable doctrine built on the code of the Old West and the fastest gun. The libertarian position must resolve this dilemma if it is to succeed.

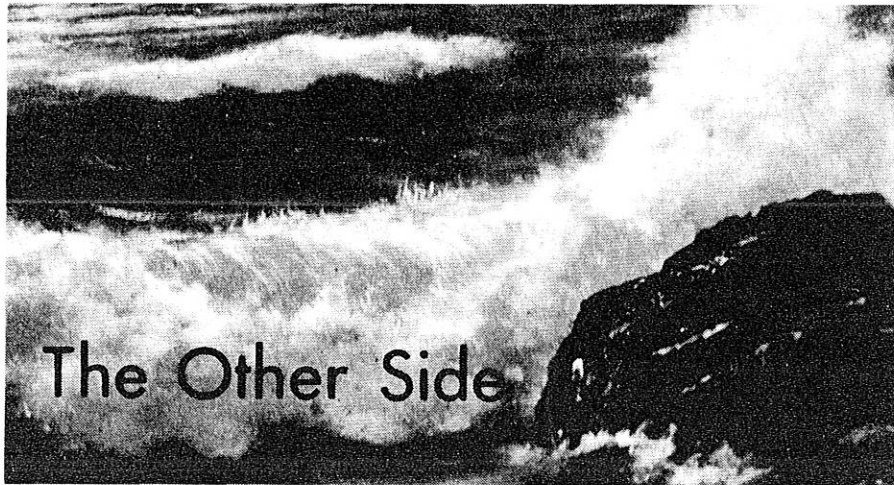
As I see it, there is no possible mental or physical legerdemain that can prevent an occasional aberrant action. Human beings malfunction on occasion. We are not a species noted for the perfection of our choices and actions.

The difficulty with both the liberal and conservative positions is that violence against *some* for *some reason*, is justified. And that is the crux of it. There is no way we can prevent bad actions on the part of others. We are limited to preventing bad actions we ourselves are capable of committing. It is not violence per se that we can prevent. But we can prevent *self-righteous* violence. And that is the burden of all political action that is related to government. It endows men with the belief that violence *under certain conditions* is righteous.

If we are to have an occasional bad action — and it cannot be prevented — let every man's mind and hand be turned against it to the degree that he does not commit bad action. If all men opposed violence per se, and not merely violence when performed by others, we will have drawn the straight line.

The straight line, if achieved, can bring harmony and peace. And without harmony and peace, freedom is impossible.





**ARTHUR PROSSER, JR.:** "Limited government invariably balloons into unlimited oppressive bureaucracy, one lesson God-and-country patriots and conservatives never seen to learn. I went to the local board of elections and disfranchised myself. I was only voting against issues and programs that increased taxes, never for persons. Then I realized that even a negative outcome is sanction of the overall political process in attaining desirable 'libertarian' ends by non-libertarian means." *Congratulations.*

**LINDA DIANE TRAVIS, M.D.:** "Just re-read all our issues and was so refreshed and refilled with the concept of freedom that I decided to send along my own 'gift' — just include it with my husband's. We share beautiful things in our 'freedom relationship.' Hope we don't miss an issue!" *Thank you.*

**ALLEN TOOLE:** "I don't agree with all your points and theories; however, I do know that freedom is truly that state of being in which coercion has no part. Perhaps all of us may someday withhold sanction. I'm closer than ever to doing it. Your articles continually help me to evaluate my position regarding government and free markets."

**ED OSTERMAN:** "Your non-political approach to problem-solving excites me much more than the old 'elect the right people to office' approach. Libertarians who go the political route contradict a main tenet of libertarian thought as I understand it: minding one's own business. The politician, however noble his motivation, is, by the very nature of his position, a meddler. Freedom, happiness, and satisfaction in life cannot be acquired by the individual through actions of others; this I have learned ever so slowly from experience. I, too, have a long road to travel toward complete understanding,

but now that I have begun the journey, I wouldn't turn back for any reason."

**JOHN OSMANSKI:** "Your 'You don't have to be an ape to . . .' was so sensible that its circulation around my neighborhood has reinstated discussion groups in re practical approaches to self-discipline, less (even no) government, and the basic concepts of Freedom. We may put a few more drops in the bucket, yet!"

**JIM HIRD:** "It's refreshing to read something that is consistent. I enclose a gift for your *Journal*, which you correctly term priceless. I'd very much like to meet you some day."

**DAVID HEDGECOTH:** "I don't hunt very much, just target shoot. Congress is trying to ban 'handguns' but, give them an inch and they take a mile; eventually, all guns will be illegal. This moves me closer to writing a Congressman. I dislike lowering myself to fight this but dislike having my guns banned and confiscated even more. Any comments?" *If you plead with your Congressman for legal actions pleasing to you, you are tacitly agreeing to be bound by whatever actions are taken. If your side wins, your opponents may come back and ultimately carry the day. Since you expect your opponents to be bound if your side wins, they may equally anticipate your surrender if they win.*

**MARC GLASSER:** "The *Journal* has contained much with which I've disagreed upon first reading. In fact, I've disagreed with much of it even after thinking it over. (I'm still not sure I want to live in a society in which stolen property is regarded as rightfully belonging to the thief. Doesn't that make all the money and property now in the hands of various governments rightfully theirs?) But your writing impels me to think and is definitely something to be encouraged."

*Keep thinking. And remember there is a difference between a system in which all theft is wrong and one in which certain men are licensed to commit theft so they can take vengeance against those who have no license.*

**JEANNE FULLER:** "Your *Journal* always seems to arrive about the time I wonder whether there is any hope that individual freedom will arrive in my lifetime. It reminds me that there are others striving to stay free of the bureaucratic octopus."

**ROBERT DUNN:** "I believe I'm in tune with one of your lessons at least, that each person must individually shoulder the burdens of his own life and not expect any government agency to do it for him. The police, for example, cannot protect you from thieves. The whole justice system is based on vengeance and has almost ceased to function at all. It's a wonder anyone still has faith in it. Recently, I formed a company to install hidden safes in people's homes. Many of my customers are interested in protecting themselves not only from the illegal criminals but the legal, elected, and appointed criminals, as well. Please continue your *Journal*."

**LONNI BROOKER:** "Thank God, the world still has a few dreamers who also possess intellect! However, a society based on your principles is a beautiful utopian dream that could never work as long as power-hungry men exist (and they surely always will) and the majority are unthinking sheep. I find your *Journal* fascinating and welcome the escape to a purer world. I enclose a gift to keep it coming and keep me thinking." *There will always be thieves. That fact does not mean I must join them. A free society is built one by one.*

**R. M. BASCOM:** "The more I read of your *Journal*, the more I want to read. You make a lot of sense in these 'senseless times.'"

**R. D. AUFHAMMER:** "There always will be 'government.' (1) God's Rule. (2) Family Rule. The 'family unit' is always government — and is necessary." *Government is a group of men who sell retributive justice to the inhabitants of a limited geographic area, by means of a monopoly of power and price. It is unnecessary. Organization, however, is necessary. The family unit is a basic organization and will continue in one form or another. So will economic enterprises in one form or another. So will fraternal groups. Do not confuse government with organization.*

**LOUISE MILLER:** "I don't care for your animal illustrations."



**WILLMA BROOKS:** "I've been one of those Albert Jay Nock wrote about, who gobbled up everything they read or heard and really understood none of it. This is evident by the lives they lead . . . talking 'about' individual freedom, and ambitiously reading, yet lacking the backbone to keep the propaganda separate from the truth. To really understand and know deep within, and never be duped or fooled again. To really live as I want to believe, all the way through each moment. To really stand and speak up for this truth I love, not just talk 'about' it. Keep sending me your *Journal*."



ALBERT JAY NOCK

**NICHOLAS ANCONA:** "I'm afraid your pacifistic construction of society would never be viable in the real world, even with an educated populace. I think it would devolve into Hatfields and McCoys on a larger scale. As no government ever gave up power voluntarily, it would seem that a pacifistic idealist's only recourse would be to drop out of society altogether and with kindred spirits live in isolation." *The ideas I offer are not submitted to a group. No group acts or feels as a group. What I have expressed is directed only at one person. You. When seen in that light, the ideas expressed are practical.*

**BURTON BERGMAN:** "You say, 'But when you benefit because you accept from the criminal some of what he has wrested from you or others, then you sanction. And that is voluntary approval.' Does my use of a government utility or service (stolen property) imply my sanction? I do benefit because I use the roads. If private roads (or any other utility or service) were available in competition and I chose to use the government utility or service, then I would agree that I'd be sanctioning theft . . . Your position, it seems to me, is like the 'original sin.' I seem to have been born into it with no way to cleanse myself." *I do not favor martyrdom at the hands of the state.*

*When a bandit aims a gun at me and forces me to surrender something, I am not sanctioning, I am submitting. Government highways that I, too, use are gun-imposed highways. I have no choice but to use them or die. In the same way do I face the bandit's gun if he seeks my money. I surrender. This is submission to overpowering force, but it is not sanction.*

**L. E. COUNTRYMAN:** "Retaliation was forbidden in the case of Cain vs. Abel and this apparently became the rule. The new start for a smooth life was not a return to freedom after the flood, but the establishment of justice. An injustice to the life, liberty, and property of another is like welding a spot in a high-speed wheel. It throws it out of balance. Whoever does so has violated his right in a smooth-running society, and knocking him off (in the case of murder) is not retaliation but the establishing of justice and restoring the balance." *Assuming the historicity of the flood, it would appear that governments were founded following the deluge. From the time man has depended on the violence of government, his character has degenerated. No man is capable of administering retroactive justice. Such justice is no more than emotional fulfillment.*

**DON FAHRENKRUG:** "I've never believed in retaliation or the use of force. However, the other day a man came to my place of employment, called me a non-union scum, etc. The name-calling didn't phase me. Then this person spit in my face. Well, that rather upset me, but I turned the other cheek. This individual then spit in my face again. I then broke his nose and rearranged his face. Now, I know that was not the thing to do, but it seems to me every individual has an invisible circle around him and when someone steps into it without being invited, there is the possibility of trouble. Maybe I shouldn't have hit him, but he seemed to be in gross violation of my freedom to be left alone. Let the state disintegrate." *I cannot say how I would act under that kind of pressure. But if I did the same thing, I trust I would have the same clear view of the merit of my response that Don has with his. Don isn't seeking to justify and make his actions morally correct. And I rejoice whenever I find a man who knows the difference between right and wrong.*

**REIS POND:** "I sit here seeking words of thanks, wisdom, or whatever — all that comes is Thoreau, Nock, and LeFevre all of a kind — and my seeking a true kindred spirit."

**JOHN GIACONA:** "You have truly changed my life . . . one of the greatest things that ever happened to me."

**GRACE HESS:** "A friend, ripped off to the tune of several thousand dollars by young punks she had befriended, was considering restitution through retaliation or other methods. I read her most of your 'To Catch a Thief,' and then your follow-up. At the outset she held View One. When I finished, she had swung over to View Two. I thought I knew a lot about liberty from years of exposure to libertarian literature. But there is always more to learn. The feedback from your articles helps to accentuate the points you make."

**JACK HERRIGAN:** "Your winter '75 commentary on self-responsibility for being free, and government existing to forcefully govern, was great! Political offices are there to control the property of others; those that fill the offices will do the control thing to one extent or another."

**BEN CAMPBELL:** "Am busier than when I worked five days a week. I suppose the civic groups think a fellow who is retired has time on his hands; they call on us for a lot of help. Am thankful to be able to help at my age. . . . I admire your philosophy. It parallels mine in most instances."

**JAMES HENDERSON:** "Your *Journal* is really worthwhile reading for anyone interested in expanding their own freedom and helping to make our world a better place. I'd certainly recommend it to friends interested in the cause of liberty today. P.S. Silence is not golden."

**J. ROGERS BARROW:** "*LeFevre's Journal* has made a courageous, lucid, and challenging defense of libertarian values and policies. May it and other voices help to create a world where men regard each other as worthy of freedom and themselves as above expropriation."

**ROBERT ANDERSON:** "Your 'subscription' policy reflects your brilliant understanding and use of Austrian value and price theory. As you well know, consumers determine the price of everything offered in willing exchange. An 'asking price' exists only as a convenience for consumers — to be accepted or rejected at their will." *While I have no objection to an "asking price," consumers pay all bills and must be free to make all final decisions. By not setting an "asking price," I try to make it easier for people to decide what the *Journal* is worth to them.*



## TO SELL AN UNPOPULAR IDEA

Bob Richardson is a very good friend of mine. He was my first student, driving from Denver nearly fifty miles to our campus near Palmer Lake during the winter of 1956-57. We were building Falconwood Lodge. The lodge later became our dining room, but at first was all the school we had, containing library, classroom, and sleeping accommodations, as well as kitchen and dining facilities.

The snow lay on the ground and the nights were cold. Bob made the trip one night every week after he finished work. The two of us would go into the unfinished portion of the building and sit on a pair of saw-horses and talk about the freedom philosophy. There was no heat, the light was poor, and the sessions rarely lasted more than two hours. But Bob was faithful to his commitment, and he paid for the lessons.

Bob has remained in contact with me during the ensuing twenty years. He has just completed a novel which seeks to impart libertarian ideas by means of narrative.

A few weeks ago, I had a provocative letter from him and I wish to quote a bit from it, with his permission, of course. "I have been pondering your last letter to me . . . wherein you thought it beneficial that books be discussed as much as possible, as this was good to get distribution . . . . Discussion by the non-professionals seems to me to kill sales. For example, according to my viewpoint, you and your staff did an excellent job at Freedom School. . . . Why then did your efforts in Colorado not turn out to be very profitable for you and your staff, as you and they so rightfully deserved?"

"The answer: Your students tried to get others to attend, but the minute they would mention to a prospective student what your Freedom School was all about, the prospect would sell others on the idea that your philosophy was silly. Not so, but that's what they did. Your students simply provided the uninformed with an opportunity to kill sales.

"I have been wondering if your good ideas wouldn't be best sold only by those who better understand the benefits of your ideas and could convince everyone to whom they would mention (them) . . . ."

That letter stimulated a whole series of recollections. I was reminded of the outstanding men and women I brought to the school to help teach the freedom philosophy. I can't begin to thank them for the many things I learned from them. Their names read like a who's who of libertarian thought. Among others (I won't attempt here to list them all) were such luminaries as Leonard Read, Ludwig von Mises, Milton Friedman, Roger Williams, William Hutt, James Martin, Rose Wilder Lane, Ruth Alexander, Frank Chodorov, V. Orval Watts, William Paton, Oscar Cooley, Hans Sennholz, F. A.

Harper, and scores besides.

When these people came to Colorado, I did not ask them to teach my ideas; I asked them to teach. This they did, often taking positions differing from mine. I do not recall a one of them who taught *my* ideas. They taught their own. But isn't that what a school is all about? I am quite certain that disagreement with my perspective hurt "sales," but what of that? I encouraged these instructors, while at our campus, to speak their views as they saw them, asking only that I had an opportunity of expressing mine, too.

While it is a popular myth of our times that the professor or the holder of an advanced degree seeks an objective position — a good educational stance is open-mindedness — it is my experience that all persons seek a position which will be *thought of as* objective. In point of fact, each of us has a vested interest in his own point of view and seeks to sustain it, while at the same time seeking to prove that his view lacks bias and is pure.

I would have to say that more potential sales were killed by the professionals I paid than by the non-professional students who had heard the varying views offered.

What of my staff? The few of us who initiated the school realized that our position would be difficult to understand and difficult to learn to communicate. Therefore, we decided that no important staff position was to be filled by anyone who had not taken a course of study from me. At least they would know what they were getting into if they sought to align themselves with me. These staff additions, like the visiting professors, expressed their own points of view. They did not hesitate to publicize where they thought I was in error. I often disagreed with some of their views. Nonetheless, they usually did good work in their administrative and teaching assignments.

By far and away the best support I ever had came from the non-professional student, the individual who came to learn and who sat through a rigorous period of concentrated study and emerged with his eyes wide open to the magnificent vista of what free men are and can do. And I am both gratified and humble in the realization that what so many learned continues, today, as a dominant factor in their lives, as their continuing correspondence attests.

Thinking about the past caused me to respond to Bob Richardson in the following way:

You've raised an interesting point respecting promotion. Let me take the proposition you offer and see how it shapes up in my recollection of events in Colorado. First, you suggest that my staff and I did

an excellent job. I'm inclined to agree. It's a difficult thing to judge since there is nothing to compare it with. Others I'm sure could have done better, and some might have done worse. But let's accept that a good job was done. Why didn't we profit enormously from it? Who says we didn't?

My purpose was to sell an idea. I think I sold it. I also think that a great many people bought it. That's the kind of profit I wanted. But because I opened it up for general acceptance, and without copyright, some pooh-poohed the ideas (and still do), but others accepted the ideas as though they were the authors of them and then passed them along as their own.

But that is success as I see it. We wanted those ideas to get out. The growth of numbers of those interested in liberty which followed our adventures at the school is, I think, an indication of a successful operation.

Your argument is that the uninformed or partially informed, because of an inability to explain my ideas fully, actually killed sales for me. That's a shrewd observation and probably correct. But let me consider the alternative. Suppose I held on, kept tight control, and compelled everyone who came to me seeking enlightenment in this area. Would I not have created a politically structured, power-based operation with me at the top expounding a kind of catechism? And that is exactly contrary to what I wished. There is one thing I *don't* want. That is power. So, perhaps, some through ineptitude lost sales. But on the other hand, others did make a great many sales for me.

I think one must take this into consideration, too. What I expounded and still expound is not a popular position. It's a tough one. Every business that is launched, even if it is run exceptionally well, doesn't win. The product has to be one the public will buy. And what I had to offer and what I still offer, has a limited market.

Now, let's take your book. If you take tight control of it, in my view it will go nowhere. Sure, you may make money if you devote yourself to promotion. And you'll have the pleasure of knowing that if sales are lost, it will be through your own ineptitude rather than that of others.

As a result of many years in advertising — newspaper, radio and TV, besides direct mail — I can tell you what all advertising tries to accomplish. It tries to get word-of-mouth promotion. Anything you can get people to talk about is apt to sell. So all advertising is aimed at getting an undercurrent of personal conversation started. I

don't think you can get that kind of reaction if you have to personally sell every customer. Further, let's suppose that you get a satisfied customer. Can you *prevent* him from talking about it to others? If you can, isn't that a kind of thought control? And if people talk, how can you control what they say, the errors they might make, etc., etc.?

Bob, when you write something, you are a creator (in a very limited sense, of course). And no creator of a living entity can let it have independent life and at the same time control it. You must decide which it is to be.

I decided a long time ago that the ideas, and not Bob LeFevre, were the apex of my value system. I've never convinced everyone I've talked to and never expect to. I don't think you will, either. Your joy must be in making the explanation, not in getting converts. You may get a convert. Here and there. But if your happiness depends on what other people do, you will never have a great deal of it. Rather, let me recommend that you find happiness in your own endeavor, regardless of the reaction of other people. *Be, and let be.*

The feedback loop is a long one, in ideological endeavors. But, if you do your job well, the loop closes in time. Don't be over-anxious for it to close. Rejoice in what you do . . . the rest will follow. Govern yourself, and let each person do the same for himself. Ideas grow best when they are allowed to flourish on their own. True, they often grow wild. And mutations and hybrids crop up like tares. Still, the main thrust of your own effort will continue and if you find joy there, then your life will be a rich one.

By no means have I been able to keep track of better than 6,000 people who have sat still for a minimum of fifty hours (sometimes it was longer) of instruction. But what is particularly fascinating to me is the number who have used my ideas as though they had originated them, thus winning fame and renown, or they have picked them up as the acme of folly and have thus won fame and renown by opposing them.

In any case, the ideas are out and are still getting out. And what will the outcome be? I do not know. I do not see the ideas I uphold being accepted on any grand or sweeping basis. Rather, I detect that here and there a few individuals accept the view that freedom and peace are concomitants both natural and right for man. And whenever this occurs, I find the likelihood of success and happiness for these individuals rising to the surface. Such persons are not a part of any "movement" or "party." They do not have to be. They are complete

*(please turn the page)*



**UNPOPULAR IDEA**

*(continued)*

in themselves. They have a high moral sense and a willingness to learn, to love, and to refrain from imposing on others. They are willing to work and to live on what they earn. And there is a gladness about them, a lightness in their step, a sparkle in their eyes. Rather than accepting that the ends justify the means, they are the embodiment of a coming integrity upon which the future of our species depends.

What I seek to instill is an acceptance of the old stoic virtues. I was impressed when Will Durant wrote long ago that "civilization is born stoic; it dies

epicurean." The stoic virtue supreme is integrity, the person who rings true. Such a person earns his own way, and although opportunities will always abound, he will not take advantage of others because his respect for himself is too high. Further, he will be gentle in his behavior and show mercy when others fail. He will not spend his time in connivance, falsehood, and force, even when the latter is indirectly applied, as by use of the ballot.

Our nation is on the decline, not because of Republicans, not because of Democrats, but because of a reliance on politics as a substitute for individual integrity. Integrity comes hard. Few seek its rigid disciplines.



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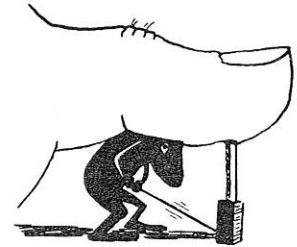
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