

FREE TRADE

ANYTHING THAT'S PEACEFUL

The Black Muslims have purchased farm land in Alabama, Georgia and several other Southern states. Segregationists sold it to them. In Alabama they own more than 1,000 acres and hope to acquire 100,000 altogether. The late Elijah Muhammad said that cold cash melts the hearts of even the most die-hard segregationists. One seller, Roy Wyatt of Pell City, Alabama, a segregationist former state senator, received threats and suffered damage to his business property when it was learned that he was trading with "the enemy", but he refused to call off the sale.

If the Muslims had approached Wyatt and said, "Please donate your land to us", they would have had the door slammed shut in their face. If they had wanted to use the public park in Pell City, he probably would have opposed it. They could have pulled guns and ordered Wyatt to clear out, but the Klan may have returned and shot them all. Yet, because they offered him something, he talked with them reasonably and they reached an agreement.

Trade v. Authority

In society, there are only two mechanisms of interaction which bring together strangers in a systematic way: Trade and Authority.

In small groups of friends, we observe affection, mutual goals and common concerns; but the small group model cannot be expanded to include society at large because nobody has time enough to learn, to exchange enough information, to "make friends" with enough people. Politicians claim to be your friend, but this is hypocrisy and everyone knows that their handshake is not worth a cup of coffee, and that their smile won't lower taxes if they are elected.

So with strangers, acquaintances, and all but your closest friends, you either have to trade, request, or demand what you need. But very few people think of trading when they want something special done. How many people are willing to walk up to a stranger's house and request to use his bathroom? If it were socially acceptable to offer him a dollar, there would be no problem (unless, of course, he is afraid of strangers).

Trade and Hospitality

There's something about trade which brings men together for mutual benefits which most people don't understand. In fact, trade is considered low class,

crude, unfriendly, impolite and selfish by many. It was the aristocrat's idea of virtue to give freely of one's hospitality, to distain from monetary affairs, and to take care of his serfs when there was famine.

It seems curious that aristocratic notions and prejudices against trade should endure in a modern democratic society. The French Revolution tore apart the social structure upon which aristocracy was based, but the upper classes won the greater victory. There was no revolution in the styles and values of the people—everyone wanted to adopt the aristocrat's life style. Even the New Left counterculture carries forward this prejudice against trading, but with a difference—everything is supposed to be free (as if everyone was everyone else's closest friend).

Often times, even with good friends, it is socially unacceptable to request too much (or to accept payment when too much has been requested). Instead everyone feels secretly annoyed with each other. Borrowing someone else's car, for example, might be called "trading on your friendship" because you are not offering anything in return except your thanks.

One reason that people don't trade more often is that it points out very clearly just how close your friendship really is. It would seem logical to bridge the gap by offering some compensation, perhaps in money; but that is today socially taboo. No one is willing to spell out the fact that he doesn't like you enough simply to give you all his possessions, his spare bedroom, or his car. Yet it is foolish to pretend that all men are brothers; and no one values all others the same.

The breakdown of radical Left social theory usually occurs when it is argued that all men should act like brothers, without recognizing that such relationships are possible only within small groups where communication is rich and frequent, and where many goals are common to everyone in the group.

Radical Libertarian social theory argues, instead, that all relationships between strangers or mere acquaintances be trading relationships, and that authoritarian relationships are illegitimate.

The state, of course, (even the democratic state) is an authoritarian institution based ultimately upon its use of authoritarian relations and its power to enforce those relationships.

Trade or Authority are the only two organizing principles of the larger society—beyond the small friendship group where everyone can be brothers.

Property & Peace

Since private property is the basis for trade—you can't trade anything which you don't somehow own—clearly private property is important in the free society. Private property is the cornerstone of a free utopia.

Most radicals and revolutionaries have failed to see this. Bakunin, who was ignorant of economics (but intelligent enough to know it), was aware from the beginning that the state socialism of Marx was pure authoritarianism. The radical libertarians today emphasize the function of free trade and private property in society simply because the alternative is centralized authoritarianism. Libertarians are radical decentralists.

If the brotherhood of man concept is based upon an error in social analysis, it will never even be approached much less attained. The hope for universal peace and freedom among men, however is *not* a pipe dream.

Free Trade, based upon the decentralized ownership of property (reflecting the decentralized location of economic information in society), is a viable alternative to power and authority once the authoritarians now in power are removed. To be radical—to be a radical libertarian—is to know that there is a workable alternative to the authoritarian institutions which modern society has carried down from the dark ages.

There may soon be no alternative. Liberation is a demand which is being voiced today in every country on earth. It is the attempt to impose and maintain authority over free men which arouses armed resistance. This is exactly why men who believe that a peaceful and free world must be built know that *that* world must be maintained through the principle of FREE TRADE!!!

Copies of this brochure are available for 25 for \$1.

This brochure is only one of 45 issue papers published by the Society for Individual Liberty. A complete set of all 45 issue papers is available for \$2 from: SIL, PO Box 1147, Warminster, PA18974.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF LIBERTARIANISM

By Jarret B. Wollstein

Philosophers have long recognized that the greatest enemy man faces in his search for freedom and prosperity is himself. Having conquered most natural enemies in his environment, man faces extinction or enslavement from his own species. Nuclear war and ecological catastrophe are just two of the more obvious manifestations of the threat created by human irrationality and aggression. More subtle, but just as fundamentally sinister, are the violent and destructive passions of men which impel them to violent crime and authoritarian laws.

For centuries men of conscience have protested the injustices of their societies and sought a better world. All too often their ideals have remained unpursued dreams or been corrupted to create doctrines and institutions of human repression. But despite mistakes, progress has been made, and the search must go on if man is not to regress to the cave. It is the force of man's ideals which impel him forward and libertarianism is one of the most advanced and consistent of those ideals.

Life, Liberty & Property

Libertarianism is a modern philosophy of individual liberty. Libertarianism holds that if man is to prosper and be free, it is the enslavement of his fellows from which he must first be liberated.

The libertarian ideology asserts that every individual has an inalienable right to *his own* life, which he should be able to live as he sees fit, so long as he respects the same right of others. By extension, libertarianism holds that every individual has an inalienable right to the products of his actions, i.e., his justly acquired property, which is morally his to use and dispose of as he sees fit.

Libertarianism holds that man's rights to life, liberty and property are principles of proper social organization which should not be violated by any other individual or group. Thus libertarianism holds that any attempt to take any portion of an individual's services or property from him without his consent is a violation of his rights and a moral abomination, inherently destructive of any free and prosperous society—regardless of whether the aggressor is an individual, a criminal gang or a government.

Libertarians also insist that the same moral principles which apply to individuals apply to social groups as well—that acts which are immoral for private individuals acting on their own authority are equally immoral for social institutions acting with the support of the majority of their society.

Libertarianism supports the rights of individuals to engage in any form of human relationship or association which is peaceful and voluntary, including the free market, trade, voluntary communes, private enterprise and syndicalism. Conversely, libertarianism is opposed to anything that is violent and coercive—a regulated market, state socialism, militarism, the corporate state, theft and war.

Anti-Politics

Libertarianism is politically neither left nor right, liberal nor conservative. Like the political left, libertarians oppose the draft, censorship, war, the military/industrial complex, laws against recreational drugs and police repression. Like the political right, libertarians oppose taxation, anti-trust laws, wage/price controls, and so on. Libertarianism is explicitly *anti-political*.

Libertarian advocates of the free market point out that the present American political-economic system is far removed from their ideal of *laissez faire* capitalism. The free market means no government redistribution of wealth, no subsidies for industry, no minimum wage laws, no government maintained franchise monopolies, and no protection from foreign competition—evils all endemic in America today.

Similarly, libertarian syndicalists have little sympathy with Chinese and Soviet regimes with their tremendous centralization of power in the government. Libertarians seek a society in which individuals are free to run their own lives—not one in which men are ruled either by collusion between big corporations and the government or by edicts of ideologists acting in the name of "the people". It is clear that a libertarian society lies in the future.

The Libertarian Society

There are two main libertarian views of the nature of the society which should replace the present coercive ones: One group, the limited governmentists, hold with novelist-philosopher Ayn Rand that there should be a government whose sole function is the protection of individuals from aggressors. They argue that the best guarantee of justice would be through a state restricted to a police force, court system, and armed forces.

The second major group of libertarians, the anarcho-capitalists, reject government altogether. They argue that since every individual has the same right of action as any other individual, there can be no such thing as a social institution with the unique or final authority to deal with aggressors. They hold that a "limited government" cannot morally prevent other groups from offering the same defensive services. Thus, anarcho-capitalists maintain that social defense should be regarded as a service, and that in any given geographic area there may well exist competing agencies of defense.

With the exception of this difference, both limited-governmentalists and anarcho-capitalists are in complete agreement about the nature of a free society: In such a society, everything from education, to the minting of money, to road construction, to welfare would be voluntary enterprises. Libertarians consider taxation and any other form of involuntary financing immoral, inefficient, and unnecessary.

(Methods of organizing and financing "public services" without government are discussed in detail in a number of libertarian books, including *For A New Liberty*, *The Machinery of Freedom*, *Society Without Coercion*, and *Public Services Under Laissez Faire*.)

Is Libertarianism Practical?

The arguments against libertarianism are almost entirely "practical ones": How could you build roads without eminent domain? Wouldn't the poor and elderly starve without public welfare? How could you defend the country without a tax-supported military? And so on. Detailed and specific answers to all of these questions and many more appear in the many libertarian books and magazines, but one general answer is simply this:

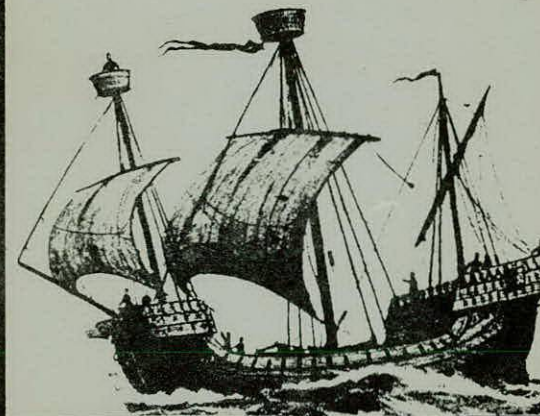
Coercion gives men no special powers or abilities that they do not otherwise possess. All that which is truly worthwhile can be accomplished without aggression. Free men are not idiots or brutes—they do not need governments to force them to provide for their education, their sick, their poor, or for their old age. Historically the greatest advancements in human welfare have been made in precisely those periods with the least governmental regulation of human action.

The omnipotent state is the archaic remnant of tribal war lords and witch doctors; it is the super-parent who tells us that we are not fit to run our own lives. But there comes a time in the life of every man and society when they must leave the stifling safety of a programmed existence, discard the myths of childhood, and venture forth into the world of self-responsible adults. There are, to be sure, risks in abandoning the nursery, but no human development is possible without risk.

As libertarians we say to the world: Wake up and cut the cord. There is a world of infinite pleasure, variety and adventure open to the person with the courage to be free.

FREE TRADE

JOSEPH COBB



SOCIETY FOR INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY