

SELF-SOVEREIGNTY: YOU OWN YOUR LIFE



Application for Membership

Society for Libertarian Life
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- STUDENT - \$2 one year
 STUDENT - \$3 two years
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 LIFE-TIME MEMBER - \$50
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THE LIBERTARIAN STATEMENT

We, as libertarians, affirm:
 That full individual liberty is impossible in any society other than a voluntary one that aggresses upon no one;
 That men and women require the full and independent use of their own judgement in order to survive at an optimum level, and therefore have a natural right to do their own thing, providing that they do not physically harm or coercively restrict another individual's life, liberty or property;
 That everyone is exclusively sovereign, and is a slave to no one;
 That the individual is best served by society when he or she is free from the forcibly imposed controls of others, acting alone or in concert (as a government);
 That all forms of coercion, aggression and fraud are always immoral;
 That the only system consistent with personal freedoms in the economic arena is the one that does not interfere with free trade between consenting individuals;
 THEREFORE, we, as libertarians, resolve to oppose all forms of aggression by any State. Government, self-appointed advisor, and all association of individuals. We further resolve to oppose taxation, conscription, individual laws which create victimless "crimes," and all programs forced on individuals without their consent. It is time that the chains of authoritarianism in economics and morality be broken. Individual rights and coercion cannot co-exist. Liberty cannot be compromised, and we will settle for no less than freedom in our time.

(adopted on May 5, 1973)

and attempt to escape north to freedom.

The Southern populace and legislators understood that the educated black was dangerous, and that the whole slavery system could not withstand the black slaves' ability to think and act independently, soon to be knowledgeable in the fact that slavery is immoral and that he ought not to be a slave. But it was the use of legislation to support slavery through government enacted laws which kept slavery alive, giving it the appearance of legitimacy and respectability to Southern slaveholders, populace and the slaves themselves.

THE LAST SLAVERY SYSTEM

Ever since the U.S. Civil War resulted in the enactment of the 13th-14th amendments, abolishing private ownership of people, it has been the State which has increased its claim to ownership of people. The high court of England in the 1830's abolished private slavery because its existence would give the slave two masters--the slaveholder and the king of England. It was ruled that everyone was a subject of the King, private slaveholding notwithstanding. Such is the case today, as the State treats citizens as real estate in much the fashion of Southern slaveholders and feudal lords. One difference remains. The serf paid his warlords around 15 to 20 percent of his income, while the average so-called free American citizen pays up to 40 percent of his income to all branches of government. Who is the real serf?

PREMISE 2 AND CONCLUSION

Premise 2. Slavery cannot be limited. That is, if man spends any of his time in involuntary satisfaction of other(s), he is a slave.

Conclusion: Since one's labor is part of one's self and time, it therefore follows that man's labor is his own. And if he is forced to give up his labor and what he produces with it, that individual is a slave. The slightest violation of man's labor, time or life by another places man under a form of slavery.

If an individual agrees to work for another at a given value, that value belongs to that individual completely. Any other situation would make man a slave.

People are not *national resources*, nor are they owned by government or private slaveholders. Moreover, as Ayn Rand points out, "Since man has to sustain his life by his own effort, the man who has no right to the products of his effort has no means to sustain his life. The man who produces while others dispose of his product, is a slave."

It is the billy club and the bullet which rob people of their self-sovereignty, time and labor. This is the exploitation of mankind.

It is time to understand that it is not the practice of slavery which makes slaves of men. It is the slave who makes slavery a practice. Slavery can be expected from slaves, but not from those who understand liberty.

*not the exact quotes from the movie.

"The political philosophy that is libertarianism is the doctrine that every person is the owner of his life, and that no one is the owner of anyone else's life; and that consequently every human being has the right to act in accordance with his own choices, unless those actions infringe on the equal liberty of other human beings to act in accordance with their choices."

*Prof. John Hospers, 1974
USC philosophy department*

In the growing movement towards human liberty, one theme stands out about the rest. And that theme is individual autocracy, the autonomous sovereignty of each human being on an absolute level.

It is the libertarian who takes an *abolitionist* stand on any variation of human slavery, whether institutionalized by private citizens claiming ownership of people (e.g. ownership of blacks in pre-Civil War South), or whether it is institutionalized by government claiming ownership of people through citizenship. Slavery is slavery and the libertarian is usually the only one who opposes government ownership of people.

The libertarian takes the position that people are owned by no one, and that if ownership must be found, it is the individual who owns his life through his own actions. It was Karl Hess, former speech writer for Senator Barry Goldwater, who wrote in *Playboy* (1969), "Libertarianism is the view that each man is the absolute owner of his life, to use and dispose of as he sees fit; that all man's social actions should be voluntary, and that respect for every other man's similar and equal ownership of life, and, by extension, the property and fruits of that life, is the ethical basis of a humane and open society" [*The Death of Politics*].

It is true that some people shy away from the definition of self-sovereignty. It can rightfully be said that ownership should not be associated with people on any level. However, in order to understand the conflict between liberty and slavery, it is best to illustrate a black and white contrast.

CONCEPT OF SELF-SOVEREIGNTY

To master one's fate, which self-ownership denotes, it is best to utilize deductive logic.

Premise 1. Man is not a slave. That is, one's own life is one's own; that man has unconditional sovereignty over his life, and that man owns his life in accordance with not being a slave to another individual or group.

A dictionary definition of *slavery* is "involuntary subjection to another or others." Under slavery the actions of the slave are dictated by a master or masters while limited involuntary subjection of another is called *bondage*. The harsh slavery experienced in the South before the American Civil War is far less obvious than those experienced in *freer*, more modern nations. Governments in the Western sphere have hidden the

harsh *slavery authority* empowered to them. However, the authority to demand complete allegiance of the citizenry to the State exists, and as in the case of Germany in the 1930's, surfaces from time to time to replace citizens from mere bondage to *total slavery*.

When the libertarian talks of liberty, it is the liberty which prevents one individual from controlling the peaceful actions of another person. The degree of control, bondage or slavery is of less consideration than the actual subservient control. That's because there is no such thing as *limited slavery*. If a government, group or individual exercises subservient control over one minor aspect of another person's life, rights or property, then, every liberty is threatened. Self-ownership must be absolute or it means nothing at all.

If a burglar has obtained the unconsented authority to remove one household article every year, what prevents the burglar from making appointments every six months? And what if the burglar decides to confiscate more than one item every trip? The mere fact that the burglar has obtained unconsented authority is what the libertarian opposes the most. However, many people are more concerned with only halting more trips and extended visits by the burglar. Somehow, people have accepted the fact that the burglar ought to be allowed to come in once in awhile.

WHO'S THE CREATOR OF MANKIND?

Government policy towards its citizens is that the citizen is the resource of the State, that people are only renters, not owners of their bodies and actions. Government is saying that they, not a god, nature or people create people. It appears as if government is trying to take the credit for the origin of life, that the *State creates people*. There might be some truth to this considering that many people believe that the State is always screwing them.

Still, the attitude of the State is disturbing. When the State denies self-sovereignty, it is also saying that people can be treated as property, like a herd of goats or horses. People are herded into the military at the command of dictators and legislators alike; people are herded into lines to pay taxes on time, and school children are herded onto buses to either get a public education or assist integration. It was Jimmy Stewart in the movie *Shenandoah* who said as the Union soldiers tried to conscript his sons, "who do you think you are ..., were you the ones who fed and clothed them..., was the State their mother's tit?"*

It is man's (and woman's) intelligence which has created demand for liberty of choice. It is man's capability of rational thought which places ownership in himself. And from the intelligence comes the ability to control destiny. Rights of self-sovereignty come from the absence of a claim to curtail or abolish one's liberty to act according to conscience alone. When the first printing presses were invented, book censorship was

common and used for controlling information. But as more printing press were built, sold and put into operation, it became more and more difficult to control the printed word. Liberty of the press did not come about through enactments or dictates; rather, it came about through the direct violation of government censorship of books and journals by the populace. It is the general disregard of controls and the ability to ignore them, which creates the essence of self-ownership.

Self-ownership has always existed and freely thrives until someone deems it necessary to limit it to a privileged few. That privileged few usually encompasses those who rule and their loyal supporters. When ABC's news reporter interviewed Fidel Castro, she asked him, "Is there freedom in Cuba?" Castro calmly said, "Yes, there is freedom in Cuba; I can do anything I want" (interview special, 1978).

BLACK SLAVERY IN THE OLD SOUTH

It can be argued that the black slave in pre-Civil War South was never a slave. People cannot be owned by another, even if current opinion or legislative enactments support involuntary servitude. Despite the fact that the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the enslavement of blacks, this type of private slaveholding was abolished. Man's nature refuses to allow himself to be owned or controlled by another. And as technology increases the mobility of people and property, it has become more difficult to confine, locate and control individuals.

If this were not the case, slavery systems similar to the ones under the Pharaohs of Egypt or the Caesars of Rome would be still operating today. But technology has enabled man to leave the harsh land and bring his abilities up to the level of those who would control him. In other words, private enslavement of people has declined because it became impractical, especially economically. Continuous resistance to slavery like Spartacus' slave revolt, makes slavery economically impractical, and sometimes dangerous to slaveholders, as well as politically difficult to handle as slaves escape and create towns, wealth and political importance. Basically, this is how Europeans slowly destroyed feudalism.

The enslavement of blacks would not have continued into the 19th Century if it were not for a few special factors. The black captives from Africa were readily made into almost willing slaves because of extreme racial, cultural and language differences as compared to Europeans. Moreover, blacks labored on easy-to-be-controlled farm fields and were taught from childhood to believe and behave like a herd of animals.

Forcibly taken from a far less technologically developed African society, the blacks were prohibited by law from learning how to read or write. This further aided the slavery system since it kept blacks in ignorance, denying the knowledge to fully understand the difference between freedom and slavery. Still, without education, many blacks took it on their own to rebel