

These situations cause people to look towards government instead of themselves for decisions on morality and ethics. Authority becomes all-important, and citizens are led to believe that without a controlling, decision-making authority, civilization will cease to function. What will cease to function is mankind's independence, self-esteem and reliance on logic.

FREEDOM AND GOVERNMENT

History shows that men always attempt to control other men. One of the best methods found is to organize a selected few into a gang. The gang receives further support by announcing its intention to prevent other gangs from doing what the first gang already does. Citizens are soon led to believe that with one big gang, crime will be minimized since crimes by local, small-time crooks will be prohibited. But who protects the citizen from the big gang? Who polices the police; who inspects the inspectors; who oversees the overseers?

A popular cartoon strip recently gave an insight into this matter. The cartoon depicted a professor explaining to his students, "Our government will establish laws to protect the individual right of privacy." "Who will enforce them?" one student asked. "The CIA," the professor calmly explained.

Government can no more protect freedom than a burglar could protect a bank. To be blunt, governments of the world make Billy the Kid and Jesse James look like lovable characters in a Mother Goose bedtime story. The point is, nobody, including both the crooks in government and those manning the local street corner, should have the authority of force at their disposal.

Freedom is the absence of aggression and government is the absence of voluntarism. The two--freedom and government--cannot coexist for long. Sooner or later, one must consume the other. The trouble is, liberty always seems to be the first one devoured.

The absence of aggression and violence in government prevents crooks from using the authority of government to promote their self-interest. No one can manipulate other people's lives without the power of physical violence. But governments do have a monopoly on force. And until voluntarism is given more chances, politics will continue as usual, and freedom will be another flickering candle in the wind.

VOLUNTARISM: THE ABSENCE OF FORCE



Application for Membership

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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 judgment 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 one that does not interfere with free trade between consenting individuals;

HEREFORE, we, as libertarians, resolve to oppose all forms of aggression by any State, Government, self-appointed savior, individual, or association of individuals. We further resolve to oppose taxation, conscription, eminent domain, laws which create vicarious "crimes," and all programs forced onto 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.

(adapted on May 5, 1973)

...the State calls its own violence law,
and that of the individual crime. Max Stirner

Voluntarism, as a philosophy advocating the absence of aggression, underlines every important issue of the day. Basically, every issue has two directions in which it may be approached: (1) *individuals may attempt to solve problems by 'voluntary' interaction among people, or (2) individuals may attempt to solve problems by 'involuntary' interaction among people.* The difference is that the latter implements **FORCE**.

The best method to show the striking contrast between voluntarism and force is to give an explicit example. For instance, one of the worst crimes is to assault another human being, especially if it is rape. When someone is sexually assaulted, a coercive action has been perpetrated against the body and liberty of another person. No *consent* was given to the rapist, therefore, the victim's right "*not to be physically aggressed upon*" was violated.

That is to say, the victim is forced to give up all choices except those choices dictated by the physical force of the attacker. The victim is robbed of his or her freedom, and made a slave of the attacker until the attacker either leaves the victim or the victim decides to freely consent to the attacker's wishes.

And so, when a person freely solicits sex by giving *consent*, no crime is committed since there is no victim. Commonly called prostitution, the prostitute gives *consent* to her customer or otherwise (1) it is rape, or (2) nothing occurs. Again, the difference is that brute force is used in one circumstance and peaceful *consent* is used in the other.

VOLUNTARISM

Voluntarism simply states that people should be at liberty to choose their own lifestyle without being forced to follow someone else's definition of life. Followers of voluntarism (*voluntarists*) believe that people cannot be forced to be good, perfect or whatever. And that an authority has no business protecting people from themselves by initiating violence.

Voluntarism opposes any compulsory or mandatory program no matter what reasons or justifications are cited. It is true, for instance, that slums need to be cleared, the unemployed need jobs and the poor need money. However, at whose expense are these wrongs to be righted? Should society or government, in the name of the poor and unem-

ployed, rob those who were fortunate enough to amass some wealth? And who, by the way, decides whose wealth is to be confiscated?

Should slum dwellers be physically dragged from their rooms to make way for urban renewal? Should apartment owners have their land forcibly seized under eminent domain? If so, who decides whose land is to be condemned and seized?

Sure, problems of the community and the individual must be resolved, but must we resort to threats of jail and violence to control people and situations? And when physical control of each person is accepted or practiced, where does it ultimately end? How far do aggression and force have to go before they are declared out of hand? It should be remembered that *if government has the authority to give what everybody "wants," then government surely has the authority to take what everybody "has."*

AGGRESSION

The opposite of voluntarism is **aggression**. Aggression is an unprovoked and unjustified assault or invasion upon peaceful individuals (& their property) who pose no physical threat to the attacker. For example, there is nothing inherently moral or immoral concerning transportation by bus. Yet, when people are compelled by fear of arrest and jail to have their children ride a bus, these parents have been injured through their loss of their *right of consent*. The parents of the bused children have committed no crime of violence or fraud against another to warrant government's edicts of forced busing.

Again, persons of an authoritarian persuasion abandon voluntary approaches to problems because they often fail to accomplish what many believe ought to be accomplished. Let's face it, everybody has some special pet project. And if someone refuses to go along with it, then, by George, the authoritarian believes, those who refuse to cooperate will just have to suffer. In military fashion, the authoritarian will see no other alternative than to crame his pet project down the throats of every citizen. Of course, it will be hailed as something *for the good of society*. But at closer examination, it is usually for the good of the authoritarian; otherwise, why would he be pushing his pet project in the first place?

The main trouble with cramming throats is that it never seems to come to a conclusion. It is commonly believed that a little force by authorities is acceptable if it is controlled and limited. But what is the limit and who sets it? What about limited robbery (tax-

ation), limited murder (war) and limited kidnapping (the draft). Aren't these ready-made foundations for building further extensions of aggression? To paraphrase Prof. Murray Rothbard, "*Once you justify the existence of aggression, once you sanction the use of force to control people, for no matter what reason, you can justify every other evil and excess of the state.*"

After one form of aggression is legislated or dictated, what prevents the enactment of another? For example, if it is permissible to draft men into the military, why not, then, draft teachers into schools and workers into factories? Where is the limit? In fact, a number of U.S. politicians introduced federal legislation to draft workers into war-related industries during World War II. Why not, they reasoned; Hitler was doing it.

NATURAL LAW VIOLATED

Worse yet, aggression is a direct violation of the nature of men and women. When controls are applied, a person is compelled to act contrary to his conscience; otherwise, force would not have been necessary.

If a person, for instance, takes the risk of hitchhiking, that person should enjoy that liberty since no physical aggression is involved. But when a governmental body enacts a law prohibiting hitchhiking, then an adherent of hitchhiking is **forced** to act contrary to his convictions. He knows that hitchhiking infringes on no one's rights, but imprisonment or fines faces him if he follows his true convictions.

Such *victimless crime laws* attack the very nature of man's dependency on reason. That is, since man (and woman) is *capable* of rational thinking, and since man's survival depends on remaining loyal to his peaceful judgments, to utilize physical force to direct man's actions is to place him in a situation in which he must act contrary to his rational nature. Instead of following their own convictions, men and women are compelled to follow the legislated or dictated convictions of rulers. And since many laws are political and have little to do with rationality or reality, mankind is forced to follow corrupt and inept laws.

Survival is then based on obeying governmental edicts, not on rationality. In such a controlled society, the individual is made to be responsive to politics and politicians. Personal convictions are manipulated so as to be swayed by political expediency.