

LIBERTY DEFINED: AN OBJECTIVIST ANARCHIST MANIFESTO

RICHARD
SLOMAN



Philosophical Notes No. 28

ISSN 0267-7105 ISBN 1 85637 171 9

An occasional publication of the Libertarian Alliance,
25 Chapter Chambers, Esterbrooke Street, London SW1P 4NN
www.libertarian.co.uk email: admin@libertarian.co.uk

© 1993: Libertarian Alliance; Richard R. Sloman.

Richard Sloman was a leading libertarian activist during the 1970s. He was leader of the Abolitionist Caucus, a radical anarchist faction within the Libertarian Party and editor of the journals *Quest* and *Versus State*. This article was originally distributed as a manuscript under the title "Liberty Defined", and is published here for the first time.

The views expressed in this publication are those of its author, and not necessarily those of the Libertarian Alliance, its Committee, Advisory Council or subscribers.

Director: Dr Chris R. Tame Executive Editor: Brian Micklethwait Webmaster: Dr Sean Gabb

**Libertarian
Alliance**

FOR LIFE, LIBERTY AND PROPERTY

LIBERTY DEFINED: AN OBJECTIVIST ANARCHIST MANIFESTO

RICHARD SLOMAN

LIBERTARIAN RIGHTS THEORY AND THE RATIONAL EGOIST ETHIC

Libertarianism is the political philosophy that advocates the right of each and every individual to his own life and property. This right is seen as absolute. It cannot be infringed upon for any reason, no matter how seemingly deserving or expeditious. Libertarianism opposes the initiation of force and the threat of initiatory force whether it be by individuals or by agencies asserting jurisdiction over entire populations. No individual or group of individuals has the right to initiate force or threaten it for any purpose. The use of defensive and retaliatory force against the initiation of force, however, does not constitute an infringement of right.¹ An individual is entitled to defend and seek redress against any physical encroachment or objective physical threat to his life and property.² One who initiates force, or the threat of it, either by aggressing someone's life and property, or by withholding a value rightfully belonging to someone else, forfeits his right by invading and abrogating the right of another.³ Thus, libertarian political doctrine limits the use of social interventionary force and (in the present context) the justifiable application of governmental power, to a purely defensive and retaliatory role. Libertarianism is, in sum, the political doctrine that the State (i.e. government) has no legitimate purpose, if at all, beyond defending the absolute right of the individual to his (or her) own life and property from the initiation of force and the breach of agreement. The ultimate outcome of a consistent application of libertarian political premises would be a drastic reduction in the purpose, role, function, and power of the State to a level generally unrecognizable in conventional terms.

Libertarianism, as a political doctrine, rests on a series of more basic assumptions and premises on human nature and its psycho-epistemological⁴ and ethical requirements. The concept of "rights" which is the prime concern of Libertarianism *qua* political doctrine is a relatively superficial and secondary application of the basic ethical premise of the rational egoism into law.⁵ A "right" denotes a potential relationship between persons which refers to a specific ethical condition of their individual nature, and is codified as a principle in judging what may, or may not, comprise their actions towards each other.

The absolute right to one's own life and property is a logical inference from the ethical premise that a conscious being, to live *qua* conscious being, must be fully sovereign over the choices in its own life. This is based on the self-evidently true observation that a conscious organism should live to serve its own self-interest; that being conscious is both the means and ends of defining and attaining one's own unique happiness, success and satisfaction. The essential characteristic of consciousness is that it is self-directing as in contrast to an externally-determined mechanism. A conscious entity with its own identity requires freedom from external, coercive interventions to apply its will. The mutual recognition of that ethical requirement between individuals forms the political-legal concept of "right".

The ethic of rational egoism is based on the epistemological premise that human consciousness is capable of understanding the universe in which we live. That human reasoning is both necessary and sufficient to understand the nature of ourselves within the

context of the phenomenal universe and derive objectively-based values from which to make rational ethical choices.

The ability to evaluative choices comes from the capacity for abstracting concepts from perceptual data. There is an all-important evolutionary threshold between living organisms which are limited to more or less range-of-the-moment perceptual responses to environmental stimuli, and conscious organisms capable of interfering and abstracting relationships which can be symbolically stored for application in differing experiential contexts. Organisms operating at the perceptual level are essentially incapable of transferring object lessons into another context. Behavior is to a varying extent genetically pre-programmed. Behavioral variation is more or less limited to on-the-spot attraction and avoidance. Learning, memory and symbolic communication are extremely rudimentary, as is the potential range of individual, and, for that matter, the adaptive range of the species.

The ethic of rational egoism is based, thus, on the epistemological premise that the objective, cognitive, conceptual reasoning capacities of conscious organisms are necessary, and sufficient to derive objective value choices. This places ultimate authority, and responsibility, for making choices, and for every other category of action, in the individual. Consciousness, and the capacity for rapid adaptation to a dynamically changing environment, is not alien to the phenomenal universe, but a natural outgrowth of its principles of organization. Thus, ethics, the science of making value choices, is neither a contradiction between human nature and the nature of reality nor is it necessarily arbitrary. It is instead fundamental to the conduct of a successful existence and ultimately to the fulfillment of a purposeful identity.

The relationship between an objectively-derived epistemology, and the ethic of rational egoism, is fundamental to a libertarian political doctrine. The argument for the absolute right of the individual to his own life and property is necessarily an intellectual one. It requires a consistent and rigorous identification of premises which can account for an entire range of problems which occur in life. Other competitive doctrines such as the complex of religio-philosophical and ideological notions which can be summarized under the multiple heading of mysticism-altruism-collectivism-statism do not require consistency in a referential sense for their "success".⁶ Every variant of the latter category propose metaphysical, epistemological, ethical and political-economic theories which provide important loopholes from reality, and with them, the sacrifice of individual rights. Libertarianism is not merely a defense of rights, it is of necessity rational selfishness, and the absolute primacy of reason in value choices. Any attempt to avoid an integrated and uncompromising defense of these principles is intellectually and in ultimate political terms, catastrophic.

Libertarianism is not, and cannot be, advance merely as political-economic solution to some more or less obvious problems associated with statism. The programmed ideological implementation of this kind of strategy has its limited uses within the context of a whole framework of fundamental psychosocial change. But there can be no intellectual dualisms permitted⁷ among its principal intellectual advocates.

The attempt to argue from the notion of social utility as a primary argument, among the nineteenth century classical *laissez-faire*

liberals was a crucial mistake, one which promoted the intellectual collapse of constitutional republicanism and the free market limited-state system. The argument from social utility provided by Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill, and later, by no less of a radical libertarian than Herbert Spencer, was an attempt to graft laissez-faire premises on altruistic-collectivist premises. This was a capitulation of laissez-faire thought on ethical grounds. It certainly extinguished any possibility of effective intellectual rebuttal to the monstrous insanities of Marxism and its successor Leninist Bolshevism.

Libertarianism, thus, is more than a political doctrine in opposition to the “cult of omnipotent state”, as announced by the poetic, but rather evasive opening line, of the “Statement of Principles” of the Libertarian Party (U.S.A.). It is an entire way of life which by its basic premises stands philosophically, and ideologically, in total antagonistic opposition to the dominant psychology, culture and politics of our time. Libertarianism is nothing less than the most radical and revolutionary doctrine known to the world. It is a rigorously rational and individualistically anti-authoritarian way of life, which must, by the nature of what it entails, threaten every existing center and institution of coercive and arbitrary power on this planet. Libertarianism is the implacable foe of Church and State. It is the ultimate eroder of all unearned privileges, coercively imposed status, arbitrary authority and unjust use of force.

Libertarianism is most well known at present for its drastic prescriptions for the dominant system of political economy. Under a libertarian system all property would be held in private ownership. This includes all of the so-called public “services” and “utilities” such as military, police, courts, roads, schools, power generation, water, sewage, fire protection, parks, libraries, medical care, and all other categories of human transactions currently monopolized by the statist ruling class.

Property ownership is a necessary delineation of control and use by individuals and groups of individuals over physical things. Every living entity must incorporate and integrate matter and energy in order to survive. The process of growth and development in all living forms is analogous to proprietary relations among conscious organisms. The crucial difference occurs in the cognitive ability among conscious organisms to objectively distinguish the specific merits of an individual’s claim to some physical entity. A claim to something is based on the investment of value in some hitherto unclaimed object or the voluntary transfer of title by the previous owner.

The concept of property is the political-legal aspect of the ethic of rational egoism. An individual’s sole rational purpose in life is to attain his own self interest. There is no reasonable and objective basis in nature to argue an *a priori* obligation on the part of an individual to others. There are only two ways in which an individual may be ethically required to accept an obligation: (1) if he has given voluntary and explicit consent to provide a value or (2) if he has caused an objectively definable damage to someone else for which he owes restitution. Self ownership is the basis for all property ownership and is the correlary of personal sovereignty or self dominion in the political sphere.

The distinction between “life and property” commonly employed by libertarian writers is a matter of convenience to extend the concept of individual rights to include both corporeal and non-corporeal possessions. The principle of ownership does not logically terminate with one’s body - it extends to whatever an individual has acquired by the investment of intelligence, effort, and capital, or by voluntary transfer of title. Thus, an unclaimed piece of land one has settled and worked is just as rightfully one’s possession, as one’s legs, arms or head.

The validity of one’s claim of ownership is not reduced by the relative need of others to one’s wealth, or by the relative scarcity of a value or category of value.⁸ The weakness, incompetence or ill fortune of others, does not constitute a valid ethical claim to any portion of one’s life, however inconsequential it may appear. This not only includes material possessions, but the knowledge and information of one’s mind as well. Contrary to the belief of

many libertarians, the concealment of information, or the offering of inaccurate information, does not constitute a violation of right.⁹

A consistent application of rational egoism (i.e. the Libertarian Ethic) leads to the conclusion that an individual has but one right — that is the right to his own life and property (as an extension of that life). As such, he can make no ethically valid claim (and thus legally valid claim as the basis for police intervention must proceed from the application and codification of more fundamental ethical premises) against someone else’s life, unless at least one of the two previously described conditions is met. This includes information, knowledge and all other capacities of one’s mind as well as possessions. They are products of one’s prior investment and acquisitions. The concept of fraud as it is defined in common law has no validity in a libertarian code of ethics or much less a rational code of law. As is the case with any other possession, an individual may not be forced to provide accurate information in any transaction unless by so doing he transfers title to that particular informational value and must provide the value as stipulated. Failure to do so, would constitute forcible withholding of a value belonging to someone else and thus a form of initiating a forcible imposition over a portion of someone else’s life.

A consistent application of libertarian premises permits no ethical validity or enforcement of so called “implied contracts”.¹⁰ Libertarianism requires the communication of explicit and voluntary consent in the transfer of title over any value. Anything less, admits the validity of imposing arbitrary and subjective claims based upon variable “community” standards. The notion of “implied contract” is a contradiction in terms. A contract consists of defined terms, the extent of liability and other obligations. Logical inferences from the stipulated terms are objectively delimitable. The extent of the agreement, however, is basically controlled by the explicit and defined nature of its specific terms. An individual is responsible for his own actions, not for the interpretations or assumptions of others unless he communicates a specific transfer of title over some portion of his life. The use of concepts to communicate a willingness to undertake an obligation is necessary to supplant the ambiguity of perceptual-level determination of assent. The transmission of symbolically specific information which defines intent in oral or written form provides a threshold of conceptually-explicit validation.

PERSONAL SOVEREIGNTY AND FAMILIAL RELATIONSHIPS

The refutation of implied contracts becomes particularly crucial for the libertarian position on abortion and parent-child relationships.¹¹ Here again, the question of the libertarian position must transcend the political level to the ethical requirement of rational egoism which solidly confronts the authoritarian doctrine of altruist-collectivism. The altruist ethic requires an individual to live for the sake of others. Under this ethic, the objective character and consequence of an action is subsidiary to who is the recipient of the action. Achieving value for oneself, for instance, is considered ethically inferior to providing the same value for someone else. This requires one to sacrifice his own value for the same of others i.e. to surrender a higher value for a lower value.¹² Although adherence to the altruist doctrine does not necessitate enforcement of self-sacrifice and bondage to the welfare of others, it creates a moral ambiance which promotes violatory interventions, and the coercive redistribution of individual product by the State. Altruism is the ethical spine of all major collectivist social doctrines and, thus, of statism.

The desire to prohibit abortion is a sensitive focus for the altruist doctrine within the contemporary secular “pluralistic” state. The claim by the abortion prohibitionist to defending the “right to life” appears to be a *prima facie* challenge to the libertarian position. The right to life thesis assumes an *a priori* obligation on the part of everyone to support the lives of the weaker members of the community. An individual’s right to his (or her) own life is subordinated and enforced by prevailing community sentiment to some other beneficiary and designated by the collective. Thus, the altruist doctrine, and its political-legal corollary, statism, re-

quires for its enforcement, the violation of the individual's right to his own life. Under altruist-collectivism, and undefined obligation i.e. an implied contract, exists between all individuals. The collectivity of implied contracts is sometimes called "the social contract".

The libertarian position entitles a woman to abort an embryo or fetus at any time in her pregnancy unless she has explicitly and voluntarily agreed to bear the child. The entitlement to abort is identical in principle to the eviction of a trespasser from one's property or deying a donation to a starving beggar. An individual is entitled to the use of defensive force against any infringement of his property and is entitled to withhold any and all value to which he is the rightful owner — no matter what may be the dependencies, weaknesses or merit of the needy. Thus, abortion is a legitimate form of defensive force employed to divest oneself of an involuntarily sustained burden. The argument by the abortion prohibitors, that the act of copulation, which may lead to conception, implies an act of agreement to support the continued existence of any embryo which may result, is wrong. There is no explicit consent to support a third party inherent in an act of copulation. No conceptually specific threshold of validation is communicated by mere copulatory action. "Giving life" or temporarily permitting an organism to parasitize one's body, does not signify assent. An act of generosity does not ethically obligate a subsequent act of generosity. Neither does the act of copulation, and the consequent conception, constitute a violation of any kind against the embryo's existence, as it takes place prior to the very existence of the ostensibly injured party. Thus, there is no basis for an obligation either by restitution or by consent. The embryo-fetus has no valid ethical claim and, thus, provides no *prima facie* basis for third party intervention.

Libertarianism does recognize the right of the embryo-fetus to its own life but its own life *only*. A voluntary transfer of value in the sustainment of its life by the host mother becomes the physical basis of the fetus' entitlement to itself. A lack of explicit opposition to the placental or umbilical transfer of value constitutes an act of investment. The host is of course free to cut off support at any time, but one may not take back something which has been voluntarily given without qualification. An act of generosity can be construed within the appropriate context as an act of entitlement over the value being transferred. Of course, if the host mother proclaims an unwillingness to the placental or umbilical transfer of nutrients she may employ whatever force she seems necessary to restrain further transfer.

The libertarian theory of right permits no incumbrance of obligation, either to the infant, to the parent or to the guardian, which has not been explicitly agreed.¹³ The parent may divest himself or herself from all further obligations to the infant at any time. The infant may be transferred to another guardianship for a fee. A dependent may proclaim himself free of its parental or guardian's care at any time. Unless prior agreement has taken place, the dependent may not be restrained from leaving the parental or guardianship domain.

The dependent infant is entitled to defend against the initiation of force, and may seek third party intervention, and redress. A parent or guardian may only employ force to defend its life and property — not to punish the infant. Any known violation of the infant's right is cause for intervention. The parent may choose to abandon the infant, and withdraw all support, but may not take its life, or inflict harm, or prevent third parties from providing succor.

Women in the present authoritarian complex are treated as inferiors culturally and legally. On the one hand women are treated with hypocritical defence to their ostensive physical, intellectual, and emotional inferiority while on the other hand, they are legally and socially discriminated against in the workplace. The system which oppresses and represses women is generically the same which enslaves all of humankind: the denial of personal sovereignty and the abrogation of the individual's right to itself.¹⁴ Women, however, are treated as even a lower order of slave. In many parts of the world they are regarded as little more than chattels.

Historically, this comes from the sexual repression and sexual discrimination of the religionist expression of mysticism. The mystic's anti-feminism is rooted in the women's obvious and dramatic real creativity. Under conditions of primitive production, the female's creative and carnal role was (and still is) an unbearable example of the beauty and significance of this life and this universe to the mystic. The deformed and unjust proprietarian modes which were adapted to the circumstances of mystical-altruist anti-feminism does not logically provide an ethical injunction against private property and personal sovereignty. Quite the opposite! They are indications of the fundamental character of proprietarian relationships between conscious, volitional entities. The rise of industrial capitalist economic systems, although accompanied by the religionist oppression of women and translated into the modern collective-state, has historically permitted women to challenge their bondage.

The only true liberation for women, as is the case with all individuals, will come from the abolition of the State, and the achievement of a purely private proprietarian society and free market. "Protective" labor legislation, unequal recognition of legal-proprietarian authority for women, sexual prejudice in the weak prosecution of rape-assault and the gender discrimination in the enforcement of victimless offenses such as prostitution are all examples of statist oppression of women. This oppression is not reduced under the egalitarian slavery of collectivist societies. Individual liberty is not achieved by equalizing the eligibility of women for military conscription or for other forms of slave labor. Voluntary market relationships are not only necessary for the political-economic liberation of women but necessary for an end as well, to the cultural subjugation of women. The authoritarian coercion of statist society will only work to reintroduce the subjugation of sexual and racial categories under different guises as is expeditious in maintaining the power of the entrenched ruling class. This process is already visible in the Soviet Union which has experienced two generations of intense statist collectivization of private property and thus near total reduction of personal liberty. The vaunted achievement of equal educational and economic opportunity for women has been a propagandistic sham. The claim, for example, of women attaining professional status particularly in medical fields must be understood within the context of the underpaid status of Soviet medical doctors even in relation to other professional fields. This propaganda showcasing does not speak, of course, to the tens of millions of women who live like serfs in the primitive poverty of collectivized farms.

LIBERTARIAN POLITICAL-ECONOMY AND HUMAN INTERACTION

The system of coercive redistribution of individual product is not only a profoundly unethical and criminal violation of individual rights, it is also unexpeditious in attaining the ostensive end of redressing poverty and misery. All value, that is any modification of an ergo-material condition which contributes to one's well being, must result from some prior investment of intelligence, effort and/or other capital input. Nothing comes "free" in nature. Even fantasy needs energy to power one's brain, and past experiences. Enjoyment of a scenic beauty requires the focusing of one's eyes, the conceptual capacity to interpret what is perceived, and evaluate its significance. In any conceivable case, the investment is made by an individual. All values for the sustainment and enjoyment of life are produced by individuals.

Collectivist doctrine attempts to circumvent the reality of individual production by postulating the existence of some reified entity creating all wealth. Reification is the attribution of substance, or substantial characteristics, to a concept which has no objectively substantial counterpart in reality. Marxism, for instance, posits the independent existence of a reified process called "dialectical materialism" or at times "historical materialism".¹⁵ It is seen as a force which works independently of human beings and other specifiable phenomena. Socialists and collectivist are quick to refer to "Society" as an entity autonomous of individuals. They argue that the specialization which permits the more efficient performance of tasks in the production of complex goods is evidence of

the existence of an entity called “Society” or of “social relationships”.¹⁶ Thus, individual decisions and wills are predetermined by the interworkings of “society”. This assumption is the basis for the Marxian class theory which considers individuals to be psychologically preprogrammed by the economic status of their families. A collectivist doctrine assumes which has been called “social realism”.

This tendency to view “society” as a real entity which must be obeyed and supported is widespread. It results in part from a prevalent psychopathology of individuals who have a neurotic insecurity and dependence on others. It is motivated by the personally insecure need to believe in some all-embracing “great together” and reinforced by complicated intellectual misconceptions. Much of the latter results from an outright misrepresentation of reality currently being propagated in state-run educational systems.

An understanding of the productive process is at the core of Libertarianism. A careful observation of productive processes and of individual behaviour supports the conclusion that all value is created and consumed by individuals. The complex “division of labor” which is a name for the specialization of individual skills and propensities is in reality a large number of individuals trading and competing with each other for scarce values. An individual is not ineluctably a slave to the values, ideas and knowledge level of his parents, or even of the total sum of his (or her) relationships with others. The process of scientific discovery, technological invention, and artistic creation, comes from the minds of individuals. The fact that people are influenced by each other, and that they can learn from indirect knowledge gained from the previous thought and experiences of others, perhaps long-deceased, does not alter the ultimate source of value. Someone, somewhere, sometime, performed some task, or had a flash of insight, e.g. in Isaac Newton’s discovery of gravity, in the Wright brothers’ invention of a “flying machine” and in Leonardo da Vinci’s paintings. Collectivist reifications of “social reality” are not only unsupportable in real experience, they are totally unnecessary to an understanding of human action.

There is no basis to assume other than the individual’s unalterable right to all the value acquired without the initiation of force or the breach of agreement. All forms of aid in a libertarian society would be privately owned and operated. Real poverty and misery would become rare in a purely *laissez faire* economy. The abolition of all artificial statist constraints on employment which presently protect the labor union monopolies from competition would simultaneously provide full employment, and lower prices for goods and services. The abolition of tariffs subsidization of industry, and all national trade barriers, would permit the accelerated development of world-wide division of labor and industrial specialization.

Monetary inflation, the prime cause of price inflation, would cease to exist with an end to the government’s enforced flooding of the market with currency notes which in reality are nothing else than masses of bad checks. The standard of living would rise for people throughout the world. During the nineteenth century, a relatively free market economy in the United States produced a long term decline in real prices in the consumer market for goods and services. The Wholesale Price Index (employing 1910-1914 prices as the baseline) dropped from 129 in 1800 to 82 in 1890. Free market capitalist growth does not produce the pernicious inflation endemic to collective-statist economies.¹⁷ It should also be pointed out that communist economies suffer from government-produced inflation as well. However, instead of high prices, goods and services are scarce or just unavailable. The buying power of communist wages reflects the wasteful and inefficient policies of a government-controlled economy. Under a *laissez-faire* economy, the standard of living would rise for people throughout the world. The increase of wealth on every level and the opening of unrestrained economic competition would provide opportunities for the millions presently compelled by statist constraints to live in penury. A libertarian society would provide the means for ending the major existing causes of poverty by abolishing the State. Socialist expropriation of the wealthier individuals

provides no solution to poverty — it merely aggravates the problem which is a lack of efficient production. The State favors the incompetent and the indolent over the able and industrious. It penalizes the productive with “progressive income taxes”. It prevents competition and new entrants into the market by establishing regulatory agencies which protect the prerogatives of established oligopolies. The State represses competition by establishing countless costly barriers to new entrants and against fledgeling enterprises. Licensing, zoning, regulations, taxes, minimum wage, safety and building codes, victimless crime statutes, are all means of raising the cost of production and constraining the entry of new enterprises. It creates and maintains poverty and the accompanying loss of incentive for individual initiative.

Libertarianism rightfully declares taxation legalized theft. The State is the biggest monopoly and always has been. It is also the source of all other monopolies. The power to rob the earnings and the possessions of individuals is the ability to subsidize enterprises which do not or cannot compete in the open market without the coercive sheltering of the State. People pay far more than mere taxes to the State. They pay for the privilege of having to buy “services” from inefficient government monopolies supported by their own confiscated earnings. Libertarian political-economic thought has documented the causal role of the State in the fostering and maintenance of every major economic problem.¹⁸ For instance, there is not one monopoly and cartel which has existed or could have existed without the protection of state power. Contrary to Marxian theory, it is not free market competition which fosters monopoly capitalism but the State. The Sherman Antitrust Act of 1883, ostensibly designed to promote competition, has in fact been part of a complex of government intervention to stymie effective market competition. But if the “capitalistic” mixed-economy democracies have perpetrated the existence of pseudo-competitive oligopolies, the communist nations have created the most unresponsive, coercive and inefficient monopolies conceivable. Every coercive monopoly since ancient times has had to have the backing and protection of state power. This includes the imperial salt monopolies in ancient Egypt and China to the modern Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) cartel.

In our own country we suffer under a growing number of government protected monopolies such as the U.S. Postal “Service” which in spite of annual subsidies exceeding 800 million dollars cannot compete with small firms, AMTRAK and the government-supported CONRAIL railroad consortium, which is failing even with two billion dollars of taxpayer subsidized loans, the public schools whose costs are rising astronomically but whose performance are by any standards disastrous. The taxpayer-consumer slave is forced to pay at both ends for these inefficient enterprises which offer shoddy services. In a libertarian society these white elephants would be the burden of their investors. They would die a natural death by competition to be replaced by new and more efficient firms.

Libertarianism asserts with enormous empirical evidence, and logically consistent economic theory, that there is no validly rational, objective basis for government intervention in the market place. Centrally-planned economies are, and will always be, economic disasters, promoting the political power of bureaucratic planners and assuring the material stagnation of entire populations. There is no possible way for planners to duplicate the first-hand knowledge of production and exchange factors which underlie the millions of daily pricing judgements which take place in any economy. State central planning is too slow, and too narrow in its informational input, to act as an effective substitute for the astronomical number of market transactions and rapid individual adjustments to changing local conditions. Central planning attempts to replace millions of brains with the decision-making power of a few hundred and ultimately with one. This cannot work effectively in a complex economy. It is in fact a throwback to the simpler agrarian-hydraulic economies of ancient China and Egypt. The factors involved were far fewer and even the the regulatory bureaucracies made catastrophic mistakes.¹⁹

The free market works much like an enormous real-time computer with hundreds of millions of variable units. Every one of these units have the capacity to make complex decisions based on their limited and specialized understanding of the conditions that effect them. These units are motivated by the strongest possible incentive to make the right choices — their own self-interest. The market (when it is fully free to operate) is always superior to authoritarian central planning. Interestingly enough, the achievement of individual self-interest tends to maximize the good of everyone. The desperate economic condition of most areas of the world in what has come to be called the “Third and Fourth World” nations, is a direct consequence of collectivization (“nationalization”) and government tyranny and terror. The impoverished state of most of Asia, Africa and South America is directly proportional to the infringement on individual private property rights. There is no “overpopulation” or resource problem in the world, only undercapitalization and statist destruction of the means of production. The tremendous economic successes of Japan and Hong Kong contradict the overpopulation thesis. Both are enjoying stunning rises in the standard of living in spite of extremely small resource bases. Japan, with a total land area of 147,000 square miles, of which only 15% is arable, supports a population of over 110 million.²⁰ Its success in uplifting its population is due to the extent to which private property and the free market have been permitted to operate. The same goes for relatively capitalistic Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore, South Africa and Rhodesia.

The impoverished condition of totalitarian states results from the expropriation and discouragement of domestic private capital accumulation and foreign investment. The recently formed Marxist state of Bangladesh is a good example of the total break-down of economic production under the looting and corruption of the ruling Awami League. The government has nationalized 85% of the non-agricultural industry resulting in all-time lows in already poor living standards.²¹ Only the reduction of government intervention can resuscitate the economy and can permit the end of socialist chaos. Literally ten millions of persons are dying each year of starvation and malnutrition because of government intervention.

Hong Kong, in contrast to Bangladesh, is a smashing success precisely because government interference and bureaucratic parasitism has been minimal. Its *per capita* standard of living has doubled since 1961 in spite of its lack of resources and having only 404 square miles (of which only 20% is usable for agricultural, residential and manufacturing purposes) for 4.5 million inhabitants.²² According to Mark Tier, editor of *World Money Analyst*, Hong Kong’s growth as “the financial capital of Asia” results from lack of exchange controls, government intervention and taxes. The basis for Hong Kong’s economic success can be summed up as having no government protected unions, no minimum wage laws, low taxes, little interference in the employment of labor, no barriers to starting a business, restrictions on foreign investments, no tariffs, quotas or subsidies. As Tier remarks: “The free market is the best economic system for any ‘developing country’.”²³

Aside from the fact that central planning, and thus government intervention in the market place cannot replace the pricing mechanism of mass-level transactional choicemaking, the attempt to institute this form of coercive statist intervention is always unjust and detrimental to the economic and psychological well-functioning of the people involved. Libertarianism recognizes the psychological axiom that no conscious individual can long maintain a sense of self esteem and incentive to create value when he is compelled to be responsible for the actions and failings of others.

Government intervention in the market place, aside from being nothing more than legitimized theft and extortion, forces the intelligent, the industrious, the thrifty and the cautious to suffer the penalties of the foolish, the lazy, the spendthrift, and the foolhardy. Individuals in the market place suffer or benefit from their own choices. They learn, or fail to learn, according to their own capacity and disposition. Central planning, and to a lesser extent the mixed economy, forces every individual to suffer the failings

and mischoices of everyone else. One is penalized on a graduated scale for being successful. One is made to pay in ways too numerous to identify for the mistakes of others. An intelligent, willing and efficient worker in a statist economy is truly a beast of burden for every malingering fool in “society”. What solace is there for this sacrificial animal of statism, this whipping boy of altruist-collectivism: the *ersatz* esteem which comes of “community service”, the cynical pat-on-the-back of his self-haling dependents, and the sneering envy of every has-never-been parasite who claims a portion of his life by *right*. One needs to look no further for the cause of most of the psychological disorders in modern society.

Libertarianism means far more than mere political-economic freedom. It means the opportunity to live as a full human being for every individual willing to rise to the task. Although individuals would have the full right to live as they saw fit in a libertarian society, providing they did not seek to impose their ways on others through the initiation of force, the demise of statism permits the rise of a fully rational form of living. It would permit every form of voluntary social and cultural experimentation to exist. Rather than the coercive homogenizing which presently takes place in enforcing rigid forms of sexual interchange and familial structures, individuals could make whatever arrangements they desired. Those wishing to live under an authoritarian collectivism would be free to do so, as long as every person involved had voluntarily entered into the socialist state. Individuals and groups could establish any social order they desired on their own property. The only basis for police intervention would be the existence of a violation of rights. Every form of religious and sectarian community could exist unmolested.

A libertarian society would be an extremely rich and variegated culture. The diversity of individual life styles and group innovation would be equalled only by the economic-material wealth of a free economy. Undoubtedly there would remain conflict and strife. There would be disputes and existence of criminal activities — some of which conceivable could reach a highly organized scale. The big difference would be the non-existence of the biggest usurper of rational law: the State.

One does not have to look to the totalitarian regimes of the communist bloc or the more traditional despotisms of underdeveloped nations to find real tyranny, repression and unsupportable coercion. The modern social democracies perpetuate the mythology of “self-rule” by majoritarian electoral process and representative government. They perpetuate the erroneous notion that their actions represent the rule of “law” when in fact, they are nothing more than a process of legitimized and institutionalized theft and countertheft. The modern social democratic state assumes a moral blank check on the lives and products of its citizens. “Majority rule” is nothing more than a constantly fluctuating coalition of interest groups pillaging a given minority. There are no well-defined objective principles restraining the legitimate purpose and functions of the State, obviously because there can be none which would stand the test of reason; only the vague notion that anything can be done to the individual if it appears even momentarily to serve an ostensible collective good. Democracy is a more soft-spoken reiteration, in political form, that the end justifies the means. On more specifically, the majoritarian ends can always justify, through their clout, the sacrifice of minority rights as a valid means.

The instruments of democracy are those employed by tyrannies throughout the ages. Conscription of individuals into military and civil service in defense of freedom is analogous to raping for chastity. Since when is slavery necessary for the defense of liberty? It can never be. Taxation cannot be justified by a majority. If one person opposes the taking of his property that is theft. It makes no difference in principle if he is robbed by one or by 50 million. The taking by initiatory force of an individual’s property is theft. No amount of flowery language, legal tradition, implied Social Contracts, altruistic claims or collectivist rationales can change the fact of theft, slavery and murder which are currently accepted as “moral” in the contemporary world.

NOTES

1. The category of “defensive” force does in principle extend to “retaliatory force”, although certain distinctions can be made between the two. The principle involved is the ethical derivation of the individual’s prerogative to defend from attack, theft or threat, a justifiably acquired value. Personal sovereignty which ultimately derives from one’s possession of oneself, including non-corporeal extensions, ethically mandates the assertion of one’s rightful interests. The protection of one’s entitlement, the ethical jurisdiction which extends over the realm of one’s material properties and all accompanying prerogatives, such as use, control, disposition, modification, etc., is the logically derivable consequence of one’s volitional, and thus, rationally conscious egoistic nature. The initial forceful intrusion of another and the accompanying presumption of a forced superimposition of will debases the operative integrity of the victim’s volitional capacity and objectively necessitates counterforce for removal of the invasion.
2. There is some disagreement within the libertarian movement on the desirability of employing defensive force. Robert LeFevre of the extreme pacifist wing reportedly opposes the use of defensive force even to the point of not breaking apart a set of manacles belonging to one’s enslaver. Most libertarians would agree, however, that an individual is entitled to defend himself with force. There is disagreement over the right of a private citizen to engage in hot pursuit and circumvent the jurisdictional authority of government in executing private retaliation and enforced restitution on the aggressor. The anarcho-capitalist purist, which is the position of the author, does not brook the imposition of even government monopoly of defensive force, as that is an infringement on the equal liberty of every individual to compete in the provision of these services on the free and open market. Thus, the individual, according to the latter, must be free to pursue the criminal violator. The practical caveat that any plaintiff wishing to maintain the trust of his neighbors should voluntarily gain the sanction of recognized juridical authorities in the apprehension of the transgressor, does not reduce the essential freedom of the individual to act in his own defense.
3. This is a *de facto* forfeiture. Ultimately, one’s right to oneself is unalienable. However, responsibility for the consequences of one’s actions and the consequences of agencies under one’s authority or control provides the ethical basis for the forceful imposition of liability. The forced physical intrusion into someone else’s life is grounds for the retaliatory removal of the physical agency performing the intrusion. The integrated character, in physical terms at least, of a volitional entity requires the redirection of force in assuring capture over the aggressive entity. A physical intrusion by an aggressor lowers the ethical identity and *de facto* recognition of self-sovereignty to the level of a mechanistic phenomenon. The initiation of force is ethically a self-disowning act. The assertion of elementary possession (control) over the physical instrument involved in the aggression does not require explicit transfer of entitlement as the presumption of entitlement is perceptibly abandoned. An aggressor perceptibly reduces his status to that of a mechanical (non-self-determining) act of nature.
4. Psycho-epistemology in this context refers to the conscious capacity of human beings to establish criteria for knowledge and for objectively knowing right from wrong. The concept of “psycho-epistemology” was first developed by Barbara Branden and has become a central concept in Ayn Rand’s philosophy of Objectivism and Nathaniel Branden’s Biocentric Psychology. In her *For The New Intellectual*, (New York, Random House, 1961, p. 18) Miss Rand employs psycho-epistemology to refer to an individual’s “method of awareness”. According to Branden: “Psycho-epistemology is the study of the nature of, and the relationship between, the conscious, goal-setting, self-regulatory operations of the mind, and the sub-conscious, automatic operations.” (N. Branden, *The Psychology of Self-Esteem*, New York, Bantam Books, 1971, p. 99.)
5. The concept of individual rights and its derivation from the ethic of rational egoism is developed by Ayn Rand in several essays in a collection of essays *The Virtue of Selfishness* (New York, New American Library, 1961). Not all libertarians explicitly develop the ethical argument for individual rights from the ethic of rational egoism. As a consequence, many libertarians are conceptually at a loss to consistently defend the necessity of an individual’s right to his (or her) own life; thus, the logically unnecessary debates over the right to abort and the non-obligatory character of various categories of “implied contracts”. Even Rand herself fails to draw the full logical consequences of her ethical system, a fact thrown up to her by Roy A. Childs Jr. in 1969 (see R. A. Childs Jr., “An Open Letter to Ayn Rand: Objectivism and the State”, *Rational Individualist*, August 1969).
6. I have subsumed these into a blanket category called the “Authoritarian Complex”. Briefly, the authoritarian complex is the system of ideas and attitudes which rationalize and culturally reinforce the existing system which divests the individual of his sovereign right to his own life. Mysticism when reduced to its basic kernel asserts that we inhabit a universe in which all phenomenal differences of physical, material nature and of space and time are non-existent. It further asserts that human cognitive capacities and reasoning are inferior ways of knowing to the process of faith which requires reliance on indeterminate sources. Mysticism requires divesting oneself of one’s cognitive authority - and relying on an external mythical entity or power. Altruism is the ethical doctrine which logically follows from mysticism which requires one to live in opposition to one’s rational interests. Collectivism is a general heading applying to a variety of social and political doctrines which subordinate the right of the individual to the group and which theorize the substantial existence of the group in reified form. Statism is the organized and legal divestiture of individual authority into the hands of those holding power through the coercive monopolies of government. At every level, metaphysical, epistemological, ethical and political-economic, the individual is divested from the authority of his world, his mind his self-esteem, his life and property. An excellent example of mysticism can be gained in the *Enneads* of Plotinus, a mystic of the third century, quoted in Elmer O’Brien, *Varieties of Mystic Experience* (New York, Mentor-Omega Books, 1964, pp. 23-30). The relationships between mysticism, altruism, collectivism and statism were originally discussed in a paper delivered by the author before a philosophy class at the University of Idaho, Moscow, “Mysticism, Altruism, Collectivism and Statism: The Four Evils” (soon to be published by the Political Action Caucus).
7. By this, I do not mean to say that libertarian intellectuals, or anyone for that matter, should be prevented from saying what they damn well please. Undoubtedly they should! What they must not permit themselves to do, however, is to fall prey to an epistemological agnosticism by allowing unresolved contradictions to remain unchallenged. If there is anything on which libertarians can agree upon it is the possibility and necessity of knowing right from wrong. The Aristotelian principle of identity, of excluded middle, does not permit dual identities, i.e. “A” is “A” or it is not “A”.
8. There is, for example, and great hue and cry about the availability of “wilderness” areas for future generations. The absurdity of attempting to premise an ethically valid claim on property in the name of non-existent persons with non-existent and unknown desires is a good example of the insanity which marks “justice” in the Authoritarian Complex. It is not enough that the individual is expropriated at every turn for the living and required to shoulder the responsibilities and liabilities of the dead but now one is compelled to sacrifice for the unborn. There is no end to the types of injustice which the Authoritarian Complex concocts.
9. The author has written several essays on the invalidity of fraud as a legitimate libertarian prohibition. Fraud punishes an individual for providing false information or for concealing information for gain. The usual argument for the prohibition against is that it results in the transfer of a value which the victim would have been unwilling to give had the accurate or full information been made available by the other party. The case against the prohibition of fraud is that the commission of deceit is not in itself an act which objectively violates an individual’s right. The provision of information or the withholding of information does not entitle the recipient to a valid claim to damages. The fraud notion is also wrong because it involves penalty for intent and not the objective character and consequence of the action itself. Fraud is further invalidated by its dependence on arbitrary and changing social contention and community standards on “how much information and how accurate”. For a fuller discussion I refer the reader to “The Fraud Question” and “Why Fraud Is Not A Libertarian Concept” published by the Political Action Caucus, Seattle, Washington, 1977.
10. The problem of communicating consent, and its ethical and legal implication, are discussed at length in a paper by the author: “A Refutation of the Anti-Abortion Position” published by the Political Action Caucus, Seattle, Washington, 1977. A good example of the traditionalist argument from “common law” precedent in support of implied contracts can be found in an article by George Steven Swan, “State Imperatives and Abortion: The Consistent Enforcement of Contract”, *Option*, May-June 1976, p. 12. Mr. Swan’s article is full of logical inconsistencies and is exemplary of the specious arguments advanced by the residualist altruist, minarchist, conservative wing of the movement. He quotes *Corbin on Contracts* that “all contracts are implied contracts” in as much as meanings are “found by a process of implication and inference”. What Swan conveniently forgets is that explicit concepts must be set forth to permit inferential extrapolations. Swan argues for “third party claimants” status for the fetus in spite of the non-existence of any agreement or even of the “third party” itself at

- the time of the action. See by “Rebutting Swan on Abortion”, June 1977.
11. This section obviously cannot deal with the entire issue of abortion. It can only establish the core ethical concepts and identify the abstract legal rights involved. Some worthwhile background on abortion is provided in Lucinda Cisler and James Clapp’s “Abortion Ruling: Some Good News ... and Some Bad News”, reprinted by the Association of Libertarian Feminists with a 1976 Addenda, from Majority Report (74 Grove Street, NYC 10014, February 1973 and October 18, 1975 issues).
 12. Ayn Rand, “The Objectivist Ethics” in *The Virtue of Selfishness*.
 13. In a recent article, Mike Dunn and Lynn Kinsky provide worthwhile insights into the position of young humans in a libertarian society. They argue successfully that children are discriminated against and violently abused under the paternalist statist system. They point out that every rationale for legal discrimination against children is not necessarily specific to children. They correctly proscribe punitive corporal punishment and recognize the personal sovereignty of children, stating: “Adults should have to look upon children as sovereign individuals who are capable of assuming responsibility and respecting the rights of others”. Dunn and Kinsky, however, do take some unsupported ethical positions. They say: “There should be no question of the moral responsibility of parents toward a child they have brought into the world. The integrity of their commitment, as well as benevolence towards another conscious being, should motivate the parents to rear the child safely and wisely.” Although parents are perfectly free to make that choice, there is no compelling ethical reason for them to sacrifice a value merely to this undefined condition called “benevolence”. Dunn and Kinsky fail to explain the origin of this responsibility or why its validity is so obviously unquestionable. In the light of rational egoism, their assertion is, at the very best, suspect. Benevolence is defined as “a disposition to do good”, or “an act of kindness” (*Webster’s Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary*, G & C Merriam Co., Springfield, 1970). For a rational person, the best good he can perform is to act in his own rational interests without infringing on the rights of others. There is no *a priori* necessity from this to do good, or act kindly to children, even one’s own. The Dunn-Kinsky argument from benevolence smacks of the hocus pocus back-door altruism which afflicts the residualist personality. Dunn and Kinsky, “Growing Up: The Case for Children’s Rights”, *Option*, June 1976, p. 11.
 14. The current collectivist-statist orientation of the feminist liberation movement is being effectively redressed at the philosophical level by the work of the Association of Libertarian Feminists. The contradiction of rejection masculine authoritarianism on the one hand while demanding the authoritarian intrusion of the State for coercive redistribution has been identified in ALF literature, e.g. “Government Is Women’s Enemy” by Sharon Presley and Lynn Kinsky; “Capitalism Liberates Women” by Tonie Nathan and “Libertarianism and Feminism” by Sharon Presley. (Association of Libertarian Feminists, 206 Mercer St., New York, NY 10012, 212-674-8154.)
 15. Frederick Engels summarizes this position quite clearly in his *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific* (New York, International Publisher, 1935). The materialist conception of history starts from the proposition that the production of the means to support human life and next to production, the exchange of things produced, is the basis of all social structure. From this point of view the final causes of all social changes and political revolutions are to be sought, not in men’s brains, not in man’s better insight into external truth and justice, but in changes in the modes of production and exchange. (See p. 54.)
 16. Paul M. Sweezy, one of the leading modern exponents of Marxist doctrine clearly demonstrates the tendency to reify in his definition of social relations: “Society is more than a number of individuals. It is a number of individuals among whom certain definite and more or less stable relations exist.” (*The Theory of Capitalist Development*, New York, Modern Reader Paperbacks, 1942, p. 3.) This view seems entirely plausible, however, its implications become absurd under closer examination. The existence of “society” according to Sweezy depends on the substantive and phenomenal character of “... more or less stable relations”. But in fact, “relations” refer to the actions and interactions of real entities in space — the concept of “relation” does not exist except as a disembodied abstraction. As such it has use in reasoning but it cannot be employed to attribute substance, and thus, independent real existence to “society”. Individual human beings act, choose, suffer and enjoy — “social relations” do not. Society is an abstraction devoid of content, except in the imaginings of social metaphysicians such as Marx Engels, Sweezy and company.
 17. Arthur Schlesinger Jr. explains “In other words, the immense expansion of the 19th Century was not accompanied by rising prices at all but by falling prices.” Schlesinger, in spite of his historical research, has no understanding of free market economics. For instance he speaks of “administrative inflation”, as aside from monetary inflation, which results from the power of firms to set prices “free from the restraints of market competition ...”. Firms can only get “free” from market competition when government regulatory agencies and subsidies protect them from competition. Schlesinger, who essentially admits to the failure of market controls, feels that they may somehow “work well ... when administered by people who believe in them.” Schlesinger’s belief is as absurd as the notion that one would be less dead if shot in the brain by a friend. A. Schlesinger Jr., “How About Taking Inflation Seriously”, *Wall Street Journal*, October 30, 1974.
 18. Among the authors who should be consulted are: Ludwig von Mises, Henry Hazlitt, Friedrich A. Hayek and Murray N. Rothbard.
 19. Most of the major problems faced in modern times by the undercapitalized nations of the so-called “Third” and “Fourth Worlds” result from the retardative influences of the “oriental” bureaucracies and their political-economic predations, or of the stultification of individual entrepreneurship and technical change in communal-tribal societies. China, for example, has had a wealth of intelligent, industrious individuals in a region rich in natural resources. At every point in Chinese history the rise of industry was held back, not by a lack on inventiveness, but by ethical disregard for the rights of the individual. Present day problems of famine, flood and drought are the direct results of statist practices in earlier times. A great work on the tyrannical bureaucracies, the forerunners of the modern totalitarian states, is Karl A Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1957).
 20. Vincent H. Miller presents a series of stunning descriptions of some of the reasons behind the famines which continuously plague the undeveloped nations. He explains that agricultural productivity is low because of a lack of industrialization and the latter cannot function efficiently without private investment and management. Where the government regulation of industry is an impediment to its growth in the few quasi-proprietarian democracies, central planning is the stultification of industry and collectivization, the ruination of agriculture. Miller points to the fact that in Soviet Russia the privately owned garden plots of Russian peasants comprising on 3% of the total agricultural area produces 48% of the total Soviet farm output. He points out that prior to the Bolshevik takeover, the Ukraine was the food exporting “bread basket” of Europe. (V. H. Miller, “World Famine — A Political Phenomenon?”, *Option* V. IV No. 4, p. 6.) An analysis of Chinese communist agricultural problems resulting from bureaucratic mismanagement is available; John Lossing Buck *et al.*, *Food and Agriculture in Communist China* (Frederick A. Praeger, London, 1968).
 21. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
 22. Mark Tier, “Hong Kong”, *Reason*, June 1977, Vol. 9, No. 2, p. 58.
 23. *Ibid.*, p. 62.