



August, 1972

"LIMITED GOVERNMENT"

I had the pleasure the other evening of listening to a professor who favors what he calls limited government. The occasion was a Libertarian Supper Club meeting in Los Angeles, and about three-score persons, most of whom think of themselves as libertarian, were present.

The professor was truly helpful. Instead of taking a position and seeking to uphold it, he was simply questioning his audience about their own beliefs. It's the Socratic method, and the professor performed the chore admirably.

The place he chose to hurl down the gauntlet was superbly selected. He challenged the question of retaliation.

He began by accepting what a great many people who call themselves libertarian accept, that each individual has a basic right to defend himself. But then came the challenges. What form is your defense to take? If you have a right to take the life of a person who is trying to take your life, don't you have a right to take food from the person who owns food and won't sell you any, particularly if the owner of the food has the only supply available? The person who withholds food from you is, in a sense, endangering your survival just as the man waving a gun in your face may be endangering you.

As the challenges poured out and went on and on, it became clear that the professor had gotten to the heart of the matter. Government, by its nature, is the agency that employs defensive and retaliatory powers. Rightly or wrongly, that is what government does. But if libertarians who do not want government, are at the same time going to insist that they have the power to do what government is doing, then what have they to offer in the way of an improvement by suggesting that we ought not have government?

The interesting point to me was the fact that many persons who call themselves libertarian are also supporters of limited government. The only basic difference between them and others who openly support limited government is that these self-styled libertarians do not want the agencies they propose to be called government. The argument is purely semantic. Factually, if the practices of retaliation

are carried out by something called the Acme Protective Association, or by something called a government, the effect will be the same. Some men, by some process or other, are going to be granted power over other men. And we have a government in fact, whatever we choose to call it.

The dilemma which the professor helped to expose can only arise in the minds of those who have not done their own thinking. Libertarian analysis has long since thought through that apparent Gordian knot. So long as people are caught up in the superstitious belief that retaliation and vengeance are the only viable methods by which to weld a society together, so long will we have governments, call them what you will.

In actual fact, the market place has long since disposed of this problem, whenever it has the opportunity of operating in an unbridled free-market way. If a man wrongs you in the market place, the correct method of dealing with the wrong is to transfer your patronage. If a man is hired and while employed on the job causes his employer's goods to be lost or wasted, his effect is that of a thief. But the employer does not call the police. He discharges the erring worker. If a customer buys a suit that rips open at the seams or shrinks or otherwise fails to fulfill the reasonable tasks a suit is supposed to perform, you do not have the tailor arrested. You change tailors. If you purchase a car that gives you trouble, you buy a different make or model. If you don't get good food at a given restaurant or grocery, you change stores. If you find that a burglar has picked a lock and gotten into your house, properly you should buy a better lock.

The market-place solutions to problems call for peaceful transference of patronage. The government solution is to retaliate. By relying on the market, we learn how to protect ourselves in ever more effective ways. By relying on the government, we learn how to retaliate and punish others who may, from time to time, malfunction. But retaliation as a deterrent to future malfunction has been shown again and again to be costly, inept, and unsatisfactory.

When more of us learn just how viable and how practical market-place methods are, we can learn how to live without counting on retaliation. And it is obvious that the man who has learned to protect himself in fact, cannot possibly retaliate, for he has nothing to retaliate against.

-- Robert LeFevre

EQUITARIAN ASSOCIATES

The Equitarian Associates conference August 26-27, Ramada Inn, 1206 S. Duff, Ames, Iowa, will consider "Possibility and Responsibility," "Basis for Man's Rights," "Babies' Rights," "The RMS Newsletter," "Legality and Morality," fee \$5.00 per day, newcomers welcomed. Write Box 948, Iowa City, Iowa 52240. -- September 15 is deadline for submitting abstracts of papers on "Causality and Politics," theme of Omaha conference December 16-17; topics include economics, psychology, politics, and "action." Joel Myklebust is conference chairman.

MEETING IN MICHIGAN

Kenneth Ryker ('66 Rampart grad) of Fort Worth has been named executive director, Congress of Freedom, annual convention September 7-9, at The Olds Plaza, 125 W. Michigan Ave., Lansing, MI 48902, keynote address: Willis E. Stone, Liberty Amendment Committee.

GROUP-STUDY PROGRAM - COLORADO

The Rampart College "Fundamentals of Liberty" course will be offered by Jerry Emanuelson as a group-study project in Colorado Springs beginning in early October. The LeFevre cassettes as well as the material prepared for the original home-study version of this course will be used, and students will have access to a library of publications and recordings on related subjects. Enrollment fee: \$25. Interested persons should contact Jerry Emanuelson, 2405 Eagle View Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80909 (phone 303: 634-0185).

FEBRUARY CONFERENCE

The California Libertarian Alliance announces a conference at USC on February 17-18, subject: "Victimless Crime Laws." Dr. Thomas Szasz, Nathaniel Branden, and Bob LeFevre, among others, have already confirmed their participation. Tickets are now on sale at \$5.00 for adults and \$4.00 for students for entire conference (half the door price, sold that low only until October 1). Mail checks to California Libertarian Alliance at 3710½ S. Grand Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90007.

"NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE - THE CASE AGAINST"

Medical journal editor Marvin H. Edwards (Private Practice) offers formidable data and arguments re major assumptions of national health insurance advocates, asserting that rising medical costs alleged to necessitate more federal intervention are themselves the result of previous federal intervention. Write for copy (\$1.00) to American Conservative Union, 422 First St., S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003.

"...And Has Learned To Fear the Forays..."

From Houston, Justin Bradburn, Jr. sends this news clip: "No Cherry Jubilee for Farmer": Michigan farmer Richard Friske gave away over 30,000 pounds of cherries (is ready to lose total of \$3,000) rather than knuckle under to new federal regulations governing the cherry industry. Bradburn appends this excerpt from our July Newsletter: "...and has learned to fear the forays which regulate and hamper our production" - Tiger in the Land.

"A PROGRESSIVE STEP" - ENROLL NOW

Several thousand individuals have personally attended the Rampart College Comprehensive and Executive sessions. If you have not as yet been able to participate in these memorable sessions, here is your opportunity to study, at home, the "Fundamentals of Liberty." You can now become the owner of written materials of inestimable value to the man who seeks to understand the fundamental issues of our time and to be a beneficial influence in the changing tide of human affairs. Thomas F. Foltz, a research engineer from Pittsburgh, has just completed this course. Here is what he writes:

"This course has been a great value to me, predominantly in that it demonstrated, in a very straightforward manner, that government is an unnecessary burden. As a former Objectivist, this course was a progressive step towards this conclusion. Additionally, the lessons were stimulating intellectually, and I thought that the exhaustive research which led to a number of interesting sidelights was amazing. I have been trying to think of some area which I feel needs improvement, but cannot do so. The lessons contained good material and were written well, while the questions provided an opportunity to display a knowledge of the subject and present an opinion."

Thomas F. Foltz

Students enrolled in the "Fundamentals of Liberty" home-study program receive 52 lessons, which are mailed five at a time. Students may raise all possible questions in connection with this material and will receive answers through correspondence with staff members. A certificate of successful completion will be awarded when it has been earned. The full price of the course is presently \$175. (If you send \$148.75 with the enrollment form, a 15% discount will save you \$26.25). Write today: Registrar, Home Study Program.

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