

LEONARD E. READ

Outlook for Freedom

Editor's Note

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The substance for a thorough-going, Twentieth Century intellectual revolution is in the making, and is showing a vitality that can be accounted for only by the inextinguishable spirit of individualism—the insistence of man to complete his own creation. That this spirit at present is evident among only a minority need not necessarily deject the devotee of liberty. Everything begins with a minority of one, extends to a few, and then to many.

The following allegory is mostly an attempt at reporting — compacting — the ideas and experiences, failures and successes, of many associates and friends during the last two decades, relating to the most important issue of our time, and as they have taken part in this small but growing revolution in ideas.

Outlook for Freedom

A Growing Danger

There were six hundred at the banquet. Not less than a total of 10,000 years of formal education had gone into the makeup of these people to whom a distinguished American addressed himself. The speaker—informed, intelligent, and courageous, and manifesting the deep convictions which he felt—told of the growing dangers of socialism and communism. He documented his statements. He named names. The dangers were real, all right. The speech was received with obvious approval.

The dining room was quickly emptied. The ladies in evening gowns and the men in dinner jackets returned to their homes bearing a new concern for the future of their country. They had, quite properly, misgivings as to what the future held in store for their children. But what to do? How does one get at these socialists and communists? Where do they get their ideas? How does one go about setting them straight? If only the masses could be made to see things intelligently, like the six hundred at the banquet!

Communism Is Not Geographic

The sun rose as usual the next morning. The birds ushered in the day, singing as sweetly as ever. Besetting problems of home and office were as numerous as before. Breakfast was about as usual. The children continued to be mischievous, acting in ways thought unwise by their elders. The morning paper told of battles with the communists, reporting approvingly of the thousands that had been killed, and something to the effect that the United Nations Forces — or the Reds — had moved one or the other beyond or behind some parallel — as though the problem were geographic.

All Except One

There was a small item in the paper about the banquet of the night before. It brought recollections of the distinguished speaker, and what he had to say concerning socialism and communism, with somewhat the same consciousness as they remembered yesterday morning's headlines, or "Ladies Night" at Rotary last year, when there had also been a good speaker. The affair came to be only a faintly recollected event to all of the six hundred — all except one.

An Honest Man

There was one who pondered. What the speaker had said lingered on and disturbed him. Socialism and communism

are not conjured-up hobgoblins. There is something very real and very evil afoot. But what is the substance of this evil? He had heard many speakers inveigh against socialism, and damn communism. Always the speakers were naming names, always they were talking about someone else. How could there be this guilty "someone else," he asked himself, if everybody talked about someone else. This someone else had to be somebody who himself was at fault, or all this talk was absurd. Guilt must come to rest somewhere. Could some of it be in him? In honesty he had to ask himself this question, for now he understood the absurdity of the shallow belief that all these faults belonged to "someone else."

Most Americans Believe in Socialism

There aren't enough people in the world, he reasoned, who admit to being socialists and communists to account for all the evil attributed to socialism and communism the speaker had told about. Could the evil possibly exist in those who do not themselves comprehend it and, thus, have no basis for admitting that they are infected? He then recalled reading a study made in 1949 by Link and Freiberg which showed that 75 per cent of the American people believed themselves to be against socialism, yet 66 per cent of them favored governmental measures that fell within their own definitions of socialism. Perhaps he was one of these and had the disease himself, shocking as was this honest and searching thought.

He could not avoid the question: Is there any of this inconsistency in me? What a venture in introspection his search for an answer turned out to be! Here he was, a man who had often proclaimed his faith in "the American way of life." He had pledged allegiance to the flag. He had sung lustily about "the land of the free and the home of the brave." Now he was about to inquire into his own status as a possible socialist-communist. He had what it took: courage to make the inquiry and honesty to look at the facts regardless of what they revealed.

Socialism Is State Ownership or Control

This person already had some comprehension with which to begin his self-analysis. He had recently come to understand socialism to mean *the state ownership or control of the means of production*; communism to mean *the communalization by force of the product of all*. There wasn't any distinction of principle between the two so far as he could see. Fascism, nazism, state-interventionism, Fabianism, the welfare state, and the planned economy all appeared to be of the same ilk; the differences, if any, were only in the details of organizing and administering coercion.

A Belief in Force

It was from beginning concepts such as these that the light suddenly dawned. He saw that all of these "isms" had an

unmistakable, common characteristic: *belief in the use of organized police force — government — as a means to attain social performance*, that is, as a means to stimulate and to regulate and to control all forms of creative human activity.

Where to begin his self-examination? He first concluded that he was confronted with the task of exploring paths or areas new to him. This required abstract thinking, that type of inquiry which is difficult but which is responsible for all progress.*

Public Education

Possibly it would be best to begin a test of his new definition of communism — previously defined as a belief in the use of organized force as a means to attain social performance — against a reasonably familiar and generally accepted idea. So he took a critical look at perhaps the least challenged of all American institutions — public education.

How did government education stand up when squared with this new definition of the “isms”? There was force involved, all right — compulsory attendance, compulsory curricula in many respects, and in all respects compulsory payment therefor. Even so, was this anything to worry about, since no institution has ever had more respectable

*Abstract thinking is the act of projecting thought beyond one's own experience. Without it there could be no progress, only an eternal repetition of the past.

and conservative support than public education? In fact, in early times, most of the leading conservatives of America, including one of the most respected occupants of the White House, had much to do with popularizing the idea in the United States. But, he could not escape a deep concern by reason of his new definition; that regardless of the prestige of its forebears, and irrespective of the talents and high reputations of subsequent supporters, public education is still a denial of freedom of choice in vast areas. He could not logically deny that it is the communalization of the product of all, by force. He even recalled how, as a freshman in college, he had learned that public education was one of the primary objectives which Karl Marx set forth in his *Communist Manifesto*. However, maybe he ought to believe in some communism.

But why, he asked, in this "great nation of freedom," had not his teachers in the several schools he had attended, raised questions about the use of force in "education"? Was it possible that they themselves had never thought of it?

The Post Office

He next looked at the post office. Let a private citizen try to carry the mails! And let him try to evade payment of his share of the government deficits incurred! If he tried it, his home would be taken for "non-payment of taxes." Here, with only casual examination, he could see monopoly and communalization by force.

Social Security

What about compulsory social security which he had supported as a member of leading business organizations? The term "compulsory," by itself, answered his question. The product of all put by force into a common pot, and doled out by authority. Coercive communalization!

Government Golf

What about the public golf course completed last year? He had supported that, too. Communalization by force! Joe Doakes' widow and the wealthy Mr. Hemingway, neither of whom had any interest in golf, were forced to give of their mite or fortune, so that a few could enjoy a special privilege.

TVA, Rent Control, Tariffs, Wages, Prices

He could already see the extent to which his beliefs had wandered into an almost total faith in force as a means to attain social performance. He had written his congressman urging many other valley projects like the Tennessee Valley Authority. He had argued before the village council in favor of continuing rent control. He had accepted his father's belief in the protective tariff. He had come to believe minimum wage laws to be good, as well as "support programs" and "parity prices" for farmers. As a matter of fact, he began to have difficulty in finding any areas in

which he was not actually a practicing communist or at least a philosophical one. He naively believed, of course, that *his* business would never be taken over by the socialist-communist government to which he had been giving strength and power, and for which he, as much as anyone else, was responsible.

Two Paths to the Same Goal

This process of thought revealed to him the source of all socialism and all communism. He, a good American, was a typical "somebody else." He lacked hardly a qualification as a socialist or communist, except party membership. At this point he realized that a party member was at least more consistent than he; the party member used and advocated force to obtain the authority to use force, while he advocated and used peaceful methods to obtain the authority to use force. He didn't know whether his inconsistency was caused by cowardice or not. Or, was it merely that his ideas about strategy differed from the ideas of party members? He and they had the same end in mind! All of this was a horrible realization. What had happened? Why had his beliefs ventured into support of the very social forms he claimed to despise? WHY?

Loss of Faith in Freedom

First, his faith in the use of force as a means to attain social performance had been growing because of a diminishing

faith in men attaining social performance by acting freely. Certainly this was true as related to public education. He had lost faith that education could become general — especially for the poor — if left to voluntary devices. He had come to believe that persons lack the capacity to look out for themselves, and to help each other voluntarily and individually in this important aspect of life; that force and policemen must attend to the educational program.

But it couldn't have been entirely a diminishing faith in free men that had caused him to resort to the force of government to build a golf course. He knew that countless golf courses had resulted from voluntary action all over the country. Here and in similar affairs, like TVA, something else accounted for the fault.

Morality Versus Legality

It was after considerable thinking that he began to detect a conflict in his own beliefs. He thought he had always believed that any man should be allowed to enjoy the fruits of his own labor; that he should be permitted to keep or use his product, or give it away, or exchange it for someone else's product — in short, to dispose of it as he pleased. He had always held that for someone else to steal this product was evil. For instance, would it be right for the people in Tennessee who wanted more power and light, to steal property from a farmer in North Dakota to accomplish their end? Obviously not! But suppose the robbery were legalized — that is, suppose a majority of the voters

directed the police force to take the property in order to carry out their object. Would the mere legality change the morality of it? Well, hardly.

Here were two areas where our self-confessed but recanting communist found opportunity to do some hard thinking. The first had to do with the rehabilitation of his own faith in what men could do acting voluntarily, co-operatively, and competitively. The second had to do with ethics and morality,* in short, with justice.

How NOT to Win Friends

Realizing for the first time that communism to attain social performance is bad because it is force, and that the same principle is equally bad by any other name, our "100 per cent American" developed a passion for the propagation of his newly found understanding. Ideas he had never before comprehended now seemed simple to him. And he became exasperated with those who remained as he had always been. Incessantly he pestered his friends, trying to shove his new-found ideas down their throats even before they understood them. Polite ones would give the appearance of listening, but he sensed that they were not conscious of what he was saying; that intellectually they were turning their backs on him. People began to think of him

*Sound moral principles, it is conceded, are based on social utility. "Thou shalt not steal" is not useful merely because it is a Commandment. It is a Commandment because it is useful, because it is in accord with sound principles.

as a bore and a crank. His wife wondered why her invitations to dinner found more and more people with "other engagements."

Something wasn't quite right and, as after the banquet speech, he had the good sense to ponder, to take stock of himself. Where was he falling down? Surely, the truths he had discovered about freedom — the rejection of force in all creative areas — must be accepted by others, or his discoveries were useless. Force and slavery would triumph if he were the only one who understood the principles of liberty! The man in the street, the masses, had to know what he now knew! He was a crusader all right, but admittedly he wasn't influencing anyone. Perhaps he was even making enemies for freedom's cause.

The Nature of Influence

Influence! Maybe he had better do some thinking about the nature of influence. So he observed how his adversaries accomplished influence over others. They were effective for their purposes. Persons who make false promises and hold out witchcraft cures to people in trouble — whether the trouble be in arthritis or cancer or poverty — seem always to gain followers. One demented political leader had even caused millions of people to follow him by the use of a mere slogan: "Kill all the Jews!" Millions of little leaflets containing half-truths, downright lies, character assassination and defamation, and the communistic trick of enshrining mediocrity — these and other devices

combined to sway vast numbers of the population to the idea of the herd, to the worship of the collective and scorn of the individual. Why could he not use their methods on behalf of his cause?

Two Kinds of Influence

Slowly but surely he discerned that influence is of two kinds: destructive and creative. He thought of the building in which he was sitting, how centuries of creative study in engineering, architecture, and construction had preceded its creation by man. And then he reflected on how any fool with sense enough to light a match could destroy the building in a few minutes. The destructive influence is as easy as standing at the top of an elevator shaft and letting oneself go; the creative influence as difficult and laborious as the rise of civilization itself — indeed, all creation is a part of the civilizing process.

From this kind of thinking emerged the conclusion that devices for destroying society are not only useless but actually dangerous for the creative task he had in mind, namely, the advancement of understanding — his own understanding.

How Are Teachers Selected?

How is understanding advanced? He resorted to an old standby — try it on one's self. He simply asked how others had helped him to advance his own understanding. Who

were his real teachers? Were they self-appointed or did he select them? Who had an influence on his beliefs? The answers to these questions were clear cut. Then, to clinch the matter, he posed this final question: "To whom do I turn when I seek perfection in any field, to someone who knows less than I, or to the person whom I regard as knowing more than I?" Again, the answer was clear.

The Student Designates His Teacher

There followed these logical deductions: The true student — the person in search of knowledge — designates his own teachers. One cannot change the beliefs of another. New evidence can, of course, be offered to those desiring to consider it. Their desires, however, will be determined by their confidence in the integrity and intelligence of those who offer the evidence. I have no means, whatever, he then reasoned, of assisting others to understand these matters except as I advance my own understanding beyond theirs, and give them valid reason to have confidence in my intellectual attainment and integrity.

At first blush this seemed to make the situation hopeless; it is so slow. How can socialism and communism ever be stopped in this slow and laborious manner, before it is too late? The tormenting thought entered his mind that maybe liberty was something quite new in the world, that, like Christianity, it had never been fully tried, and that perhaps there were many answers yet unknown to anyone.

You Can't Shoot an Idea

Nonetheless, he wanted to stop this social disease. But how? Again, he referred to his own past experience as a guide for future actions. Had someone stopped him from believing in the use of force as a means to achieve social performance? The speaker at the banquet had stimulated him to study the matter and test his own beliefs — that was all. What actually, had happened to *his* former beliefs in the use of force? Had someone else destroyed these beliefs? They still persisted in the minds of others, and he wasn't certain that he himself was yet wholly free from them. He found, when reflecting on his own experience, that an idea or a belief is never destroyed; it is merely accepted or rejected by a person, nothing more. In his own case he had rejected his beliefs in the inordinate use of force because he had accepted a new belief that took their place, a belief that society can be best served by the release of human energy — that is, by men acting voluntarily and freely. This acquisition was a process governed by his own person. No one else had any command of the process except as he considered someone else to be ahead of him in understanding, and could thus be chosen by him as his teacher.

Each Discovery Is Made by One Person

In his efforts to find a cure for this social cancer whereby force is used as a means to attain social performance, he

considered the problem of physical cancer. No doctor to-day apparently knows the cure. How absurd it would be if all medical scientists, in panic over the devastations of the disease, suddenly quit their research and "took to the road to explain the evils of cancer" to everyone in America! Only the quacks would do this.

How necessary it is that the skilled men continue their search until some one or a few individuals find the answer. And only *one* need find it. Nor need the discovery itself be clearly understood by all men; it never is on any subject. How many, for instance, understand the science of hybrid corn, or the workings of penicillin, or how to make an automobile? Yet the benefits redound to vast numbers all over the earth.

Hosts to Socialism

What, then, of this cancerous belief in the use of force as a means to attain social performance? Who knows how to cure it? He had no convincing evidence of any such person. It is true that there were many pretenders for the honor. In fact, most of the people at the banquet had thought it was this simple: merely cast everyone else in one's own intellectual image. But now he realized that all who believed this were, unknowingly, infected with the very beliefs that they allegedly were bent on destroying. To make everyone else similar to them would only serve to spread this belief in force for an ever greater number of purposes.

Negation Is of Little Value

He had observed numerous techniques to rid the country of socialism, like attempts to expose the fallacy in some specific bit of legislated force — techniques like the repetition of slogans, the use of comic-strips, name-calling, and even dignified and scholarly efforts at negation — and had seen that they were no panacea for our ills. They served in some instances to set people to thinking, like the speaker at the banquet had set him to thinking. A few of them performed, in a limited way, somewhat of a trigger function. These techniques had about the same value as proving that the world can't possibly be flat. Get that done and you must still prove that it isn't a prism, a cube, a cylinder, a rhombus, a dodecahedron, or any other of the infinite possibilities that shape can take. Unless such proofs set men to thinking what *is* the shape of the world, they are valueless.

Affirmation Is Required

Similiar, as to procedure in finding a cure, is this social cancer, he thought. If a person proves only that one form of coercion is antagonistic to the spirit of inquiry — the essence of the educational process — there still remains the endless task of proving that each of the manifold forms and combinations of coercion is antagonistic to any and all creative performances. These techniques are not enough. The problem requires affirmation more than ne-

gation. It can have but a positive solution: the rehabilitation of a belief that social performance, whether in medicine, electricity, housing, education, or any other creative activity, can be best attained by men acting in response to free will and volition. As this faith develops, the beliefs in the use of force, as a principle, are rejected, discarded, forgotten — by the individuals of the new-found faith. True, the negative approach (the world is not flat) can and often does drive away the single fallacy under attack by causing a person to reject it. But this accomplishes little more than to create a vacuum into which the next plausibility (maybe, then, the world is a cube) naturally finds its place. Affirmation and proof of a right principle or a fact, on the other hand (the world *is round*) leaves no room for any of the numerous errors.

The Law of Probabilities

One of these days, perhaps, some one person may arrive at such a high stage of understanding as to what man can accomplish in voluntary action, and develop so skillfully his explanations of what he has learned, and convey impressively enough the deep meaning of his insight and its significance to others, that people may accept the conclusions and abide thereby. This thought gave him hope. *And he knew enough about the law of probabilities to realize that if ten thousand or a million were striving for this attainment, then the chances of some one person finally achieving it were greater than if only he and a few others*

made the attempt. The social cancer threat warrants every person potentially able to understand the meaning of liberty to lend a hand. An emergency exists! He saw in this line of thought the justification for making available his own findings to such others as could be interested in knowing about them voluntarily. He saw the need for all helping each other in a necessary intellectual levelling-up process. And, further, he realized that his role was to search for understanding himself. Otherwise, what right had he to expect or even hope that others would or could assist in this grave situation?

In Accord with Right Principle

He had found a new strength, a relief from the evident failure which had attended his early efforts to “save free enterprise” or, in speeches, to frighten others into an acceptance of his ideas. He recalled, before he had learned a proper golf swing, how he had used all of his weight and muscles, and the weakness he had felt against the little golf ball which defied his awkwardness and wouldn’t go the distances or conform to the directions he had in mind. Finally, he had learned to swing his club more in accord with a proper physical principle and, for the first time, he began to feel his power. Likewise, in this instance. He had now discovered that the way to understanding, the exploration of that which was unknown to him, correctness in action — in short, his part in the way to freedom — was through his own person.

Preparing for Truth

Of course the task was not then completed. He had merely discovered what seemed to him to be the right formula. The answer to the problem was a matter of infinite quest. Little did he yet know about the nature of man; about the differences between true charity and police grants — the degrading doles collected and distributed by the force of government. Even less did he know about life in accord with the principles of love whereby the potentialities of men — in spirit and in energy — can be released from authority, as contrasted with life in accord with the principles of violence whereby energy and spirit are inhibited and suppressed; about how responsibility and authority in all tasks find their proper relationships only among free men; about poverty and criminality having most of their origin in the misuse of organized force.

He had, for the first time, a realization that his weakness had been in his own mental stagnation. He began, now, to think of himself as a person having capacities for intellectual evolution. It was in this manner that he set himself at the feet of Truth and thus, self-humbled, knew what Goethe had meant when he said of nature: "The man incapable of appreciating her she despises, and only to the apt, the pure, and the true, does she resign herself and reveal her secrets." He had resigned himself in order that Truth might resign herself to him. In short, he had qualified as a student — as one ready to search for Truth.

Now, his course was clear. He was in search of ideas

that were at once morally clean, intellectually honest, economically sound, and spiritually elevating. There must be, he reasoned, pre-conditions to this search, certain attitudes and values which, if lived by and attended to, would facilitate this quest. He began to list the ones he recognized, with the acknowledgment of his own limitations to do so and with an awareness that there would be revisions as his understanding advanced.

Ultimate Wisdom

First, one should possess a belief in an Ultimate Wisdom. An individual who has no such faith, beyond his present perceptions, cannot logically arrive at any other than an authoritarian conclusion. Lacking this faith he must believe in his own omniscience, or that of some fellow dictator whose slave he willingly becomes. Such self-centered persons naturally seek to force their "enlightenment" upon their fellowmen. Is it any wonder that heads of totalitarian regimes smear a faith in God as "an opiate of the people"? The philosophy of freedom and the acknowledgment of a mystery of life, expressed as a faith in God, are inextricable parts of the same thing.

Intellectual Integrity

Second, one must perfect his own intellectual integrity: the faithful and accurate reporting, by deed and by word, of that which one conceives to be right. No man can rise

above his best judgment. But the quality of that judgment can improve. Thus, expressing one's best judgment, without any adulteration whatever, is the best conduct one can offer; it assures the rule of truth as nearly as it can be attained by man. Without the practice of intellectual integrity, freedom's cause cannot advance.

Humility

Third is the necessity for humility in its proper sense, that is, humility before Truth rather than servitude to a mortal master. It is that spirit of inquiry which, during infancy and adolescence, causes us to seek the knowledge of those judged to exceed us in understanding. This spirit is lost whenever one becomes self-satisfied with his excess of knowledge over his contemporaries, rather than humbled toward what is unknown. Learning must continue for humility to persist. The person who is learning comes into possession of knowledge today that he was unaware of yesterday, and yesterday he found out something he did not know the day before, and so on. By projecting this experience into the future, he can logically assume that tomorrow promises enlightenment on what today he does not know.

Truth can thus be discerned as an object of infinite pursuit; full understanding is seen to surpass the attainment of any person. Comprehension of these facts assures teachableness — that is, humility, a mark essential to the intellectual upgrading of man.

Love of Freedom

The fourth pre-condition is a desire for individuality — a love of freedom that is born of reason. Variety is an essential fact of nature. Each individual has a vested interest in this variation — in people being different. If every person were cast in the image of any one person, mankind would perish just as certainly as though all the elements were to take on the properties of chlorine. It is error to want all others to be like one's self. Desire only that others leave one free to be one's self, and wish them free to be themselves so that all may voluntarily join their differing aptitudes and abilities into that harmony which makes for progress. Such a desire is consistent with the interest — indeed, with the preservation — of all.

Responsibility for Self

Fifth is an awareness that the responsibility for one's self is the most important possession of man. Whom the gods would destroy, they first make dependent. Free people are independent and inter-dependent, not dependent. All virtues grow from personal experience. If a person is relieved of the problems of life, that person is also relieved of individuality. Absolve men from the penalty of their errors, or remove the rewards for their excellence, and the world will be peopled with fools. There would remain only the desire for a shepherd, and resignation to being driven by his dogs — the attitude of the serf, but not of a free man.

Principles and Ideals

The sixth pre-condition is the determination to follow principles rather than expediencies, ideals rather than conveniences. Expediencies and conveniences which are in conflict with right principles and high ideals are but the solace of the blind or the dishonest. A right principle is timeless. An expediency, on the other hand, is an act in which a timeless principle is violated. An act of expediency is, therefore, wrong; there is no such thing as a short-term good deriving from a long-range evil. An act which bears an ill effect in the future, no matter how distant, is an evil act when it is committed. Our blindness to the losses may give the appearance of net gain from an evil act, but it is only a false appearance. The failure properly to weigh the time dimension in our calculations, signifies the inability to think correctly. The person who urges and receives a low rent by reason of government coercion may favorably regard the money he has "saved" to provide other comforts. He may think of this as his gain. But this act which robbed the owner of his property is a part of the same equation which will eventually result in no new housing. If no new housing is not a gain but a loss, so are the acts which caused it. Principles and ideals, to be discerned, require thinking in terms of time, consideration for those who follow as well as for those presently among us.*

*The clergyman who said, "It is good to be well-born" expressed a time-dimension thought. This can be explained by an appropriate paraphrasing of the Golden Rule: "Do unto your progeny what you would have had your ancestors do unto you."

Rejection of Force as a Creative Agent

Seventh is a rejection of the use of coercion as a means to achieve creative ends. Coercion must be understood for precisely what it is, a force that can restrain, restrict, suppress, destroy. It is not a creative agent. The true believer in human freedom is one who never resorts to coercive methods for creative purposes, be it in the field of medicine, education, housing, farming, electricity, or any other.

The true advocate of freedom knows that only men in voluntary effort can attain these ends short of a resort to legal robbery. And he knows that a nation of robbers will soon destroy itself, and can seemingly attain the appearances of progress only while there is something remaining to rob. To insist on attempting to do by force what men will not do in free action is itself authoritarian; it is the attempt to cast others in one's own image; it is that weakness in man which lets him try to play God.

Advancement of Understanding

Eighth is a recognition that action on behalf of freedom stems only from its understanding, including an appreciation of the manner by which understanding is reached. Were it understood that coercion is repressive and not creative, there would not be, for example, such a political device as "social security." Understanding comes through individual endeavor, not by the process of haranguing

others. We have no way of forcing a change in the beliefs of others. We can only submit new evidence, new ideas, new facts, new arguments for their voluntary acceptance. Each person is the captain of his own beliefs.* It is the student who always designates his teachers. It is the person with the receiving set who always does the tuning in, not the broadcaster. To be tuned in, to be designated by someone else as his teacher — the only means to constructive influence — requires his confidence in one's intelligence and integrity, an achievement exclusively of the individual.

Courage to Stand Alone

The ninth pre-condition for the advancement of freedom is a willingness to be with a minority, no matter how small, when the tides of unreason are on the rampage, even to the extent of being a minority of one. If his actions and beliefs are discordant with majority behavior, it should give the accomplished friend of freedom no particular concern. He is concerned solely that his words and deeds be in strict accord with his own conscience and concept of truth. Anything less than this intellectual strictness amounts to a weakness that becomes grist for the collectivistic mill.

*"No man believes or can believe except by his own effort; for no man can reason except with his own thoughts, or be convinced except by his own logic."—Pierre Samuel du Pont de Nemours, *On National Education in the U.S.*, 1800.

A Spirit of Inquiry

Tenth is the spirit of inquiry. Without a persistent, endless search for truth, liberty is left stranded and unguarded against collectivistic clichés and other barbaric assaults. Knowing how to live in liberty is purely a product of the intellect, and to that extent is difficult of preservation. Its protection exists in depth of understanding, freshness in explanation, qualities that only a persistent spirit of inquiry can assure. Against these high qualities of the mind and spirit, the theories and promises of life by force have no impact, none whatever.

Patience

Eleventh is patience. If one would make haste, let him first be certain he is not hurrying in the wrong direction. The demand for programs of speed on the grounds that "time is running out" more often than not prompts actions which preserve the very ideas we wish to replace. Time does not run out, for time is infinite. It is ourselves that run out, for we are finite. We run out of ideas and understanding and patience. And when in panic, if instead of restoring our own intellectual larders, we adopt the methods and tactics of our adversaries, we join their forces while thinking we are opposing them. If the achievement of individual liberty depends solely on an advancement in understanding the principles of liberty, then it follows that liberty cannot be ours to experience faster than understanding can be

advanced. If, as individuals, we gain an understanding of liberty and lend every possible encouragement to others to do likewise,* there is little more that we can do in the way of speed, and we should realize this fact.

Stance

The twelfth pre-condition is ideological poise or stance, the ability to retain hope and high-quality effort in the face of steady streams of daily announcements of men everywhere in the world putting shackles on man, seemingly a certain disaster to human liberty. Required are at least two strictly personal accomplishments. The first is the riddance of emotional hang-overs to *faits accomplis*. Events which have taken place can serve no rational purpose beyond information, instruction, and perhaps inspiration from which to construct the future. Second is a recognition that our beliefs have no more place in the consciousness of others than others elect to give them. These attitudes, if thoroughly perfected, are resignations to reason. It is in resignations of this sort that one is freed from frustrations, and unburdened of needless troubles. It is only when we render unto God that which is God's that we can conserve strength for the evolution of individuality, a problem He

*The phrase "lend every possible encouragement to others to understand liberty" covers an enormous field of activity. It requires a detailed treatment not suitable to this piece. But this should be said: All such activities by those who reject the use of force in creative affairs must be absolutely voluntary, devoid of pressure of any kind, be it economic, social, political, or otherwise.

has left with us. In limiting ourselves to our own perfection we achieve greater understanding, qualify for such help as others may give to or expect of us, and thus shape events yet in the making. It is as important to know our limitations as it is to be aware of our potentialities.

Every Person Is Capable of Improvement

The preceding twelve conditions to an advance toward freedom, he noted, all had their origin in the virtue of individuals. And it seemed that they were easier for him to formulate than to practice in his new pattern for everyday life. Much of his experience, and nearly all environmental influences, were at war with these dictates of his reason. Yet, as in everything else at which man tries his hand, he saw that with determination and constant attempts he was making progress. He became certain, for the first time, that he was capable of evolution during his own lifetime.

Freedom Is Not Outside of Man

Others, observing these changes in their friend, and aware of the object of his new and all-pervading interest, began to make inquiry as to the outlook for freedom. Most of them were thinking of freedom as something separate and apart from themselves and others as individuals — as though freedom had a capacity, independent of man, of coming and going as do comets or sun spots, as though it

were beyond their own wills and conduct, as though it were a thing granted by the gods whose capriciousness their friend could discern and predict.

Outlook for Freedom

He replied, in effect, that there was now as much chance of achieving freedom as at any time in the history of the world. He emphasized this view by asking a simple question: "Have not you and others as much capacity for understanding as those who came before you?" He would then go on to explain what he had found in his own search for truth: that freedom is the virtue of a person; that this virtue consists of beliefs and actions consistent therewith; that the belief in the use of force to achieve social performance negates freedom, it being but a belief in the "goodness" of badness; that for man to be fully free he must first appreciate that others, as well as himself, are responsible and self-controlling and that they are, therefore, quite properly beyond his dictation, beyond the possibility of being cast in his image against their understanding and will; that there can be freedom only if there is as firm a belief in the capacity and right of others to act freely and rightly as the belief in one's self to act freely and rightly; that it is only when these beliefs are mastered, firmly held and lived by, that one can have any salutary influence in releasing man's spirit and energy.

He went on to explain the error found in this common contention: We must choose between freedom and se-

curity. He said that slavery, not security, is the alternative to freedom; that slavery provides only a security against living one's own life; that the opportunity to complete one's self, to finish out one's own creation, is what he and most other people really want; that the security which results from such opportunity is the only security consistent with the purpose, aspiration, and dignity of man.

Quality Comes First

It is interesting to observe what happened. This devoted friend of freedom had given up the mass-production concept of educating "the man in the street," of setting straight "the millions who have votes." He had concluded that these others were not some vast impersonal collective that could be made to follow him in his designs. These others were persons, not too unlike himself. They had will and self-determination. They decided for themselves, the same as he, what they would think. From these observations he deduced that the freedom problem has to be approached qualitatively and not quantitatively. As for himself, he turned to the sole origin of quality to which he had access: his individual self, realizing that his only route to truth was through his own person. By this seemingly selfish approach more and more people sought his counsel because it was to their profit to do so. This demonstrated to his satisfaction the only manner of coping with the quantitative problem. "Chance comes to those who have prepared themselves for it."

What Would Christ Do?

That he found the pursuit of his own perfection a task big enough for his intellect and energies was, as he confessed, the supreme understatement. Always, he was mindful of the enormity of his undertaking. Quite often, when in a dilemma, he would ask himself: "What would Christ do in this situation?" Once, when recommending this procedure to a friend who was in a quandary, he got back this unexpected question: "Well, what would He do?" On reflection he had to acknowledge that he did not know. Then it dawned on him that such a question had value only if asked of himself; that when this was done it called up from within himself that answer personally believed to be right — absolutely right, without any qualification whatsoever.

He concluded that if he would search for the right and concede nothing to the wrong, and act accordingly, then truth would have the best chance of comprehension by him. But he conceded that one more ingredient was needed: faith — faith that honest and diligent inquiry will be rewarded with revealed truth, and that if he made gains in learning the truth, the truth thus gained would serve to set him and others free.

Only the Right Is Practical

There were those who, when contemplating his line of reasoning, contended that it was right but that it was im-

practical. He gave no more acknowledgment to these contentions than personally to regard them as contradictions in terms. They amounted to nothing more than contending that an evil is practical. He, on the other hand, held to the view that the philosophy of freedom — that is, the freeing of human energy and the human spirit — is practical because it is right, and for no other reason.

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