

# Freedom Matters

A Weekly Newsletter

Dane County, Wisconsin

Vol. 2, No. 28

Friday, July 12, 2002

We are a free people in a republic, under a constitution which limits the powers of government to those necessary to secure the unalienable rights of each person to their life, liberty and property. Yet, when a legislature is in session, no one's life, liberty or property is safe. It's the curse of a democracy. That's why we have a republic instead. *Freedom Matters* dedicates itself to the fight to restore our republic. Most of the press and courts fail to do so. They've forgotten that freedom matters.

## Hayek's Road to Serfdom

Friedrich Hayek's classic, *The Road to Serfdom*, was published in 1944. It's been reprinted many times. Hayek notes that a "liberal world" existed in England, the U.S., and for a while in Western Europe, based on the liberty and freedom of the individual. That is still the definition of "liberal" in our lexicons. Paradoxically, the freedom of thought that was part of it could also lead away from freedom, and over time, that has mixed up the political meaning of the term "liberal."

### The liberal world was based on three elements:

1. *political freedom*
2. *economic freedom* (i.e., a free market system)
3. *strong property rights.*

Those three elements produced the flowering of the industrial world and an unparalleled prosperity that made England, and then the United States, into superpowers. As Tom Bethel points out in his 1998 book *The Noblest Triumph*, similar elements underlay the earlier prosperity of the Roman Empire.

The critical role of a **free market** is probably the least appreciated of the three. Free market prices, based on supply and demand, provide the crucial information that enables the free market to work.

The purest example of a free market is seen on the shelves of the grocery store. From the farmer to the processor to the grocer, the system works superbly, **without any central planning!** In fact, central planning, where tried, has always resulted in serious market failures compared to the unplanned, free-market system.

As Hayek points out, **economic systems are far too complex to work well on a large scale, except in a liberal world** (i.e., free people, free markets, and free property rights). As a more recent example, the Soviet Union, with the world's greatest natural agricultural resources, was unable to feed itself when it ran its food system by central planning, no property rights, and no individual freedom. Its grocery shelves were empty.

Hayek says one has to go back before World War I to have lived in the liberal world. Here was the greatest engine ever devised for the progress and prosperity of humankind, and instead of staying on that road, the western nations, starting with Germany, turned off on the road to serfdom. *They embraced the political philosophy of socialism, which advances by destroying property rights.*

We are suckers for the quick fix, something-for-nothing promises, perpetual motion machines and Ponzi schemes, lotteries and one-armed bandits, free drugs and free medical care provided by the government. We are willing to become perpetual children in cradle-to-grave parentage by our dotting government.

In a kinder vein, we believe no one should go unfed, unclothed, unhoused. Surely, if we take money from the rich to give to the poor, the rest of us can salve our conscience. So that's what we do. The richest 50% of our population pays 96% of the income tax. The poorer half pays only 4% of it.

In the words of Bastiat, "Legalized theft." **Socialism developed the conceit that the poor could only be saved by such legalized theft.** *That, Hayek demonstrates, is the road to totalitarian government, the road to serfdom.* Why? It requires coercion. It requires an ever more pervasive central planning of people's lives.

Once that coercive system is in place, no matter if for the most benign of motives such as the relieving of poverty, it leads to oppressive government. As the most ironic example, the masters of the communist world lived like kings, but not the masses. **In extreme cases they starved!**

The first three-quarters of Hayek's *Road to Serfdom*, which points out the above, is a work of genius. His last chapter is a fall from grace, as if his insight deserted him. In that chapter, he looks ahead to a post-World-War-II world, and envisions a world government as a way to avoid future oppression. He proposes a world government of limited powers, and his description of it is based on the United States model of a federal government of limited powers. Such central powers have to be limited, because if not, it becomes a totalitarian state, which Hayek passionately opposed.

The problem is that **even in the early 1940s**, when Hayek wrote it, **the U. S. federal government, was already well along on the very road that Hayek condemned.** Our judicial system, like the Roman Catholic clergy of the middle ages, or like the German judicial system under the Third Reich, was already the accomplice of oppression. **Our courts had destroyed the limited powers provisions of the U. S. constitution.**

**Our courts have voided the entire Article I of our constitution, as well as the ninth and tenth amendments of the Bill of Rights and the clear protection of property rights written into the fifth amendment. With Bush's proposed new Department of Homeland Security, we will next have the germ of a U. S. gestapo.**

Our two-party system has a Democrat-Socialist party and a Republican-Socialist party. That's why people don't vote. **The choice between the two is HOW QUICKLY we move on the ROAD TO SERFDOM.**

We are ripe for reformation. It will come via a new political party for restoring property rights, for without property rights, there is no freedom.

**A big step back towards freedom can happen here in Wisconsin, in the elections this fall. As a rarity, in the vote for governor, the voters have a real choice to take that step.**

Readers' Bulletin Board. e-mail us your comments. Include your name, for publication by *FreedomMatters*

Published by Freedom Matters, Inc.,

Bob Bowman, 4417 Rocky Dell Rd, Cross Plains, WI. 53528.

To subscribe or unsubscribe, e-mail to rebshar@chorus.net, or call Bob at (608) 831-6653.

Our e-mail subscriber list is confidential. We will not sell or reveal it. Michael Byrne, Editor.

**Back Issues of Freedom Matters available on request, as e-mail.**