

Everything Voluntary – Introduction

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Introduction

by Skyler J. Collins, Editor

The mainstream political, education, and parenting philosophies all have one thing in common: promoting the domination of one group of people over another. In politics, this is the ruling class, ie. the politicians and bureaucrats, over the ruled. In education and parenting, this is teachers or parents over their children. Someone's interest prevails over someone else's, and in these arenas, violent solutions prevail over peaceful ones.

The purpose of this book is to question the “virtues” of human relations based on violent coercion, and to promote instead human relations based on mutual consent. For it is under one type or the other that human interaction in all arenas of life necessarily fall.

From large-scale social organization and maintenance to the small-scale family unit, it is the position of this editor that peace and prosperity are most likely achieved through relations based on mutual consent. This book should prime the reader to develop an understanding and commitment to the political, social, and life philosophy called “voluntaryism.”

Voluntaryism evolved from libertarianism and its two foundational principles: the *self-ownership of every individual* and the *non-initiation of aggression*. The complete recognition and total utilization of these principles in not only politics and law, but also in the economy, education, and parenting, is voluntaryism. Peace and prosperity are the ends, voluntaryism is the only means.

This book is a compilation of essays carefully selected by the editor to introduce the reader to voluntaryism specifically, and libertarianism generally. They are a mixture of classic and modern from varied writers who all have at least one thing in common: their commitment to voluntary action in their area of expertise.

Politics

We begin this primer with the widest view of human life on Earth. The political arena the world over is rife with conflicts and contentions. No matter the system of government, be it a monarchy, a democracy, constitutional, or totalitarian, they all rely on the use of violent coercion to create benefits for one group or groups of people forcibly derived from another. Kings and lords over serfs and subjects; the majority over the minority; representatives and special interests over citizens; a dictator and his army over slaves.

Where is the system of governance that relies on persuasion instead of force? Can a system of governance be realized without one group's interests taking forceful precedent over another's? Is a "system" of governance even necessary? Should government be centrally planned by "the elite", or de-centrally developed by "the people"? What is the alternative to the so-called "necessary evil" of the State? What is the alternative to what amounts to the enslavement of mankind?

Religion

Throughout the history of the world, people have co-opted the State in order to spread their religious ideas "by the sword." Religions were held up, funded by, and protected by violence. Religious intolerance was everywhere, and, unfortunately, is still found in many places today. When and how did religious tolerance develop? What was it that brought people of different religious beliefs together to work out the problems of mutual existence?

One of the greatest triumphs of liberty was the spread of the doctrine of "separation of Church and State." In most nations of the world one can follow his conscience and worship whoever or whatever he pleases, so long as his worship does not violate anyone else's rights to do likewise. Even non-believers are protected by this beautiful doctrine of religious peace.

But not so fast. While official religion has been mostly removed from the "public sphere," another more insidious institution has taken its place as the object of zealous devotion. With temples, oaths, hymns, covenants, banners, and liturgical practices, the State has made for itself a religion all its own. Society now tolerates different views on God, but question one's Nation, and you'll invite for yourself some serious trouble. If you want to see how bitter people can become, refuse to salute the national banner, recite the national covenant of allegiance, or sing the national hymns, and you shortly will. Their cult-like commitment to the State becomes painfully obvious. Secular theocracy now rules the world over.

Economy

On to the most important sphere of life to the typical human being. How an economy is structured can mean abundance and plenty, or scarcity and death. Should people be free to trade their property and their services unmolested? Or should the State intervene to control the market with regulations, price controls, professional licensure, and paper money?

The 16th and 17th centuries saw the birth of free market economics. The 18th and 19th centuries saw its realization, mostly, and the biggest advancements in industry and the standard of living the world had ever seen. They also saw the birth of Socialism, and the 20th century saw Socialism's bloody realization.

However, the 20th century also saw the near-death and rebirth of a particular strand of free market economics, the so-called Austrian School. Named after its greatest pioneers, Austrians Carl Menger, Eugen von Bohm-Bawerk, and Ludwig von Mises, the Austrian School of economics is the greatest and most consistent school of free market economic thought. It is from this school that we will explore both the free market and its alternative, for only this school is completely compatible with peace, prosperity, and voluntarism.

Education

Our second half of the book, the last two sections, brings us into our homes and families. Our children are literally the future of humankind. The State knows this, and has gone to significant lengths to undermine and replace the parental role. Its biggest success is in compulsory schooling. In most of the world, children are forced by the State to go to school. Where they aren't, parents forcibly educate their children at home. Absent are the rights and will of the child toward his own education.

Fortunately, there is an alternative: unschooling. After revealing the hidden agendas of compulsory schooling, we'll explore the curious and extraordinary world of unschooling. For only unschooling is compatible with the principles of voluntarism. True unschooling, however, is not only limited to a child's academics. It's concerned with the entire parent-child relationship. This brings us to our final section.

Parenting

The home is where the bedrock of freedom must be laid, and the seeds of liberty planted, and cultivated by parents committed to the future peace and prosperity of their children. It's also where children learn how to become functional adults. How parents treat their children teaches children a great deal about human relations. This point cannot be stressed enough. From infancy onward, how children are treated makes the difference between an Adolf Hitler and a Mother Teresa. There is no excuse for violence in the home, where children are born with an expectation of love and safety.

Parents that are mean and violent show children how to be mean and violent towards other human beings, and when these children do as they're shown, they're labeled as bullies and deviants. On the other hand, parents who approach their children as fellow human beings, having dignity, deserving respect, and acknowledged as simply ignorant about life are instead peacefully mentored through life's many challenges. Children are easily misunderstood, and parents are quick to set unreasonable expectations for their children. This leads to conflict and heartache instead of peace and love. We shall peek into the world of voluntarist parenting, where children are raised with love and compassion, instead of fear and violence.

Resources

This brings us to the end of this introduction. Each of the topics above are given due consideration within this book, however, what is herein presented is merely the tip of the proverbial iceberg. It's what's under the water that is truly fascinating and life changing. For that, each section (besides Religion) is followed by a short compilation of resources, both in print and on the Internet. These resources represent the best of what this editor has discovered. Their importance in developing one's understanding of voluntaryism, free market economics, unschooling, and peaceful parenting cannot be understated. The future of humankind is quite literally at stake. This book is dedicated to that future. Godspeed!

Next – Section One – Chapter 1, “Persuasion versus Force” by Mark & Jo Ann Skousen