

# Defining a Free Society

*Guest post by Brian Lobb.*

What is a “free society”? Some people think that having economic freedom while controlling others socially is freedom. On the opposite side, certain folks think that having social freedom while controlling their neighbors’ pocketbook is freedom. Neither stance is freedom when you really break it down. To have a truly “free society” all interaction needs to be on a voluntary basis, this is also known as voluntarism or voluntarism.

Voluntaryism “is the philosophy which holds that all forms of human association should be voluntary. One of the moral principles frequently used to support this philosophy is the non-aggression principle, which prohibits the initiation of aggression or coercion”.

## **Non-Aggression Principle**

The guiding principle in a free society is the non-aggression principle. Per Mises.org, the non-aggression principle is described as “an ethical stance which asserts that ‘aggression’ is inherently illegitimate. Aggression is defined as the ‘initiation’ of physical force against persons or property, the threat of such, or fraud upon persons or their property. In contrast to pacifism, the non-aggression principle does not preclude violent self-defense.”

## **Society Today**

To be social is human nature; people tend to think in “group think”. They say things like “For the greater good...”, but is it really good? Just because one group makes up a majority of thought on a subject, does not mean they should have the right to use force against the minority group. An example is how the majority of Germans, before and during WWII, choose to subjugate the minorities. Granted most did not know that it would escalate to the extreme of genocide. Yet when force is used to control non-violent people, just because you do not *like* what they are doing, it becomes a slippery slope and someday you might find yourself on the side of the minority.

Our current society is not a free society; all one needs to do is to open their eyes to see the coercion and violence the government uses to control non-violent behavior. As long as someone is not harming another person or their property, their behavior should be allowed, even if you disagree with their actions. However, coercion is allowed in a free society to protect yourself, your family, and your property from the harm of others.

Detractors of this type of society will typically state that certain government functions need to be funded with violence and theft (taxes). Usually they mention cops, courts, military and roads as the functions that must be run by the government. Yet all of these functions

could be provided by a voluntary society. To explain how that would work would take more time and pace than is allowed here, however there is a great book called *The Market for Liberty*. This book attempts to answer all questions on how a voluntary society could replace our current, violent, coercive society.

## **The Free Society of Tomorrow**

Just because something has not existed in the past does not mean that it cannot exist in the future. Looking back at history, all large paradigm shifts in global thinking have been resisted with skepticism and sometimes even violently. At one time the earth was thought to be flat and the center of the universe, slavery was wildly accepted, and most countries were run by monarchs.

There are many websites and philosophical movements currently available to research and study how voluntarism would work, and how our society could evolve overtime to become freer. One such website is [Mises.org](http://Mises.org), also known as the Ludwig von Mises Institute. This website has many articles, audio and video dealing with Austrian economics and voluntaryist philosophy.

Another wonderful website is [LewRockwell.com](http://LewRockwell.com), which is self-described as anti-state, anti-war and pro-market. Lew Rockwell is a libertarian commentator and advocate for free markets in the fashion of the Austrian School of economics. He is also the founder of the Ludwig von Mises Institute. His website is more of an Op-Ed site with great articles and audio podcasts pushing a voluntary society, anti-war agenda and free market economics.

For the audiophiles out there who like to listen to talk radio and podcasts, Free Talk Live is a good choice for information and entertainment. The show is live 7 nights a week on over 100 radio stations and streams on the internet and satellite radio. You can also download every episode for free off of the website in the form of a podcast. If you want to listen without commercials, you can donate \$3 a month for the commercial free version of the podcast with their AMP program. The format is an open microphone style talk program in which any subject can be discussed. The hosts, Ian Freeman and Mark Edge, discuss the topics brought up by callers with an underlying voluntarism filter.

## **Conclusion**

Hopefully in the future people will look back on this time in history and wonder how we allowed a group of people calling themselves government to rule our lives with violent means. A free society is within our grasp, all that is required is for you to take action. Today there is a movement called the Free State Project which hopes to help spark the evolution toward true freedom. [Click here](#) more information on the Free State Project.