

ents from every walk of life, so high in fact that no one when queried ever advised him that they would forgo education of their offspring in a free society featuring a voluntary school system.³

Surely the structure, content and performance of a freely functioning private school system would differ and improve upon the present oppressive endeavor: after all, freedom has the open texture which accommodates creativity and fosters ingenuity. Learning would develop in untold and unpreordained paths; those who desire to improve would find great benefits in the system whereas those who merely take up space by reason of illogical laws would find another enterprise—such as honest toil for fair recompense—more to their liking.

Perhaps those athletically inclined individuals would continue to delight their partisans by their periodic gridiron feats or court exploits, but it seems likely that school teams would soon revert to students playing ball for fun and recreation, not as a subsidized and masked business fortified by the taxpayers, many of whom care naught for the weekend antics of Saturday's heroes. In short, those who can and wish to learn would do so, without the immoral application of force to compel endowment of the system by unwilling participants.

Third, should society (or, more

correctly the productive individuals in society) pay for education as a matter of justice? The argument proves too much. Society represents an open-ended exchanging fraternity which fosters trade and exchange of goods, services and ideas, as well as warmth, friendship and harmony. Each person in a society benefits from free exchanges of value with others, yet that very advantage would be substantially abased by the introduction of force in an atmosphere which requires liberty.

Voluntary Exchange Is Best

Voluntary exchange of value diminishes where the element of coercion creeps in: compulsion restrains the free development of ideas and predetermines the end, thereby shutting out the enormous possibilities for creative activity. Again, in a shortsighted sense, A benefits when B learns to be a doctor, but A pays for that benefit voluntarily by exchanging some of the value he creates for the application of B's skills. Each person gains from the development of his or her virtuosity; who can employ some sort of social calculus to decide whether A benefits more than B does when the latter secures his diploma in surgery?

Furthermore, formal education does not serve as the sole or even the highest means of personal development. All of us know of wonderful people who mastered a craft or im-

parted great virtue and knowledge without a degree or, indeed, with very little schoolhouse training. Each person or family should choose the type and extent of nurture from an ever-widening shelf of illuminating choice. Society, and the individuals in society, benefit the most from the vast creativity fostered by such a reign of freedom.

Rampant cheating and chicanery in the academy serve not only to betray proper morality but also to disclose a greater malevolence within. Public education induces such wickedness simply because it is constructed on wrong principles: force, not freedom. In a free society, the sting abates and true wisdom flourishes. ☼

Wise Strategy

TRYING to answer an involved question about some socialist panacea in one or two minutes is hopeless and unfair by the test of intellectual justice, for the same reason. Unless ample time is available and willingly offered by those who will be judging your case, it is probably better not to enter that particular courtroom at all; it would be better to refuse to accept its jurisdiction. In other words, it would be better to refrain from offering your views on all these questions at that time and place.

The wise libertarian is one who uses his time to the best advantage, who employs whatever honest strategy will best defend the concepts he holds dear. To do that is not cowardice. Why suffer bruised shins battling the keepers of the sacred cows in an arena of injustice and disadvantage while so many fertile fields for libertarian talent remain untilled?

F. A. HARPER, "Sacred Cows and Bruised Shins"

—FOOTNOTES—

¹See, e.g., Kaus, Robert M., "How is Bob Jones U. Like Ms. Magazine," *The American Lawyer* 63-64 (April 1982). Of course, the key issue of whether any institution should receive tax-exempt treatment is never addressed. See my "The Elements of a Fair System of Taxation," *The Freeman*, September, 1982.

²On my venture toward degrees in "higher education," I developed an interesting technique: I divided my notebooks into two parallel columns; on the left, I wrote down that which I needed to regurgitate to pass the course; on the right, I took notes of thoughts which, for me, approximated the truth. The content of the competing columns differed vastly! I have found the right hand section of help in life after college.

³See Read, Leonard E., "One Way to Assess the Future," appearing as Chapter 25 in *How Do We Know?* (The Foundation for Economic Education, Inc., Irvington-on-Hudson, New York, 1981), 105-109.

IDEAS ON



LIBERTY