

## Means to an End

THE MEANS he uses to gain this end may be persuasion, argument, prayer, non-resistance, non-cooperation, guile, counterviolence, politics, or whatever. Most probably it will be a combination of several of these and similar measures, depending on circumstances and his understanding of moral principles.

My goal is freedom—a condition of non-molestation among persons. To the best of my ability, I will strive toward that goal. I will use the means which seem to me to be both morally right and tactically effective.

For example, I would prefer to persuade the would-be murderer to let me live. But if that doesn't work, I believe that I am morally right and tactically correct in using counterviolence to defend myself against him. And that is probably what I will do if the occasion should ever arise.

I believe that I am morally right and tactically correct when I choose to join my fellow men of a like mind in resisting aggression from the gangster at home or the marauding army from abroad—so long as we ourselves don't deny our own principle by using violence or the threat of violence upon our peaceful neighbors who do not choose to join us; so long as we confine our actions to defense against a *direct and unquestionable* threat to

our lives, liberty, or property. I believe that this can be accomplished more effectively by voluntary and coordinated group action than by involuntary group action or isolated individual action. I believe that it is morally right and tactically correct to advocate and support a government dedicated to the proposition of preserving freedom—a society wherein no person is permitted to molest any other person; a society wherein every person is legally forbidden to molest any other person. And, of course, I believe it is morally right and tactically correct for society's political agent to use the necessary degree of legal counterviolence required to stop any person from molesting any other person. It seems to me that the sole purpose of government—the social agency of coercion—should be to defend equally all of its citizens against whoever molests them.

## A Doubt

THUS do I advocate and support the use of purely *defensive* violence as an integral and necessary means toward the preservation of maximum freedom in a world where many persons are not yet willing to live in peace with their fellow men. But it should be noted that I have no way of knowing with absolute certainty that my endorsement of even de-