

often called license! While license—a condition wherein some persons molest other persons—is all too frequently called freedom! The popular concept of freedom has always described a condition in society wherein some persons use legal violence or the threat of legal violence to compel other persons to conform to their wishes. The degree of molestation has varied from time to time and from government to government. But at no time under any government has the popular concept of freedom ever been used to describe either an actual or potential condition of non-molestation among persons.

A Mutual Concept

FREEDOM is destroyed between two persons to whatever extent either one uses violence or the threat of violence to impose his will or viewpoint upon the other. Regardless of who is the aggressor and who is the victim—or whether the violence is legal or illegal—freedom is still infringed.

If you have rendered me helpless by throwing me to the ground and sitting on top of me, everyone understands clearly that my freedom has been severely curtailed. But what is not generally understood is that your freedom is also curtailed as long as you must spend your time and effort to hold me down. You

thereby restrict your own progress and improvement just as you do mine.

Freedom is a *reciprocal* relationship based on *voluntary* agreements and actions. This applies in all human relationships, even though they are seldom as clear and dramatic as person-to-person violence. The only real possibility for complete freedom for yourself as an individual is for you to refrain from initiating violence or the threat of violence against anyone else. This is the vital first step toward a condition of mutual non-molestation—a step that any one of us can take as soon as he is ready.

A Question

BUT,” someone may ask, “since I am holding you down by my own free will, how can it possibly be said that I am thereby interfering with my own freedom? I am doing exactly what I want to do!”

Maybe so. But if the man on top understood the full significance of such a course of action, he would not deliberately follow it nor use the word freedom to describe it.

The reality of this thesis that no person can really have complete freedom for himself while he is imposing his will—legally or illegally—upon the creative activities or incomes of others may possibly be more easily un-