

An Epidemic Needed

I BELIEVE it is inadvisable to seek the solution by a highly organized and bloody violence. History tells us that the outcome of such an attempt on behalf of freedom, even though seemingly successful in overthrowing a tyrant, has often been merely to crown another tyrant. The danger inherent in trying to use force to wrest freedom from the grip of power is that victory goes to whoever is most adept in the use of violence; it does not necessarily go to whoever is right on the issue over which the battles are fought — because victory is judged according to the use of the weapons chosen. The advocates of freedom are certainly not assured of being superior in the use of violence. And even though their side wins the battles, its leaders are liable to choose, for personal reasons, to retain the power that has been given them — as happened after the French Revolution — leaving the cause of freedom still the loser in the end.

People fight only when they have something to fight against. When they find out what it is, and if it be an idea, physical force and bodily battle can be avoided. In fact, the use of force to battle an idea tends to generate it rather than to kill it. I doubt if an idea has ever been killed by means of force.

The enemy of the free market is an idea — the belief that controls can serve the freedom of man.

No, the educational approach is not only the safest road to success, but the only sure one to lasting success. This may seem like cowardice, but is it cowardice for one to choose the best weapons for victory in any cause? This we know: Any law or regulation will be nullified whenever enough persons judge it to be unwise and improper, and not until then. Not every person needs to become convinced that it is unwise. Not even 51 per cent of them need to become convinced. All that is necessary is for a few thought leaders in all walks of life to become convinced because they are the ones to whom many others turn for guidance and advice. It is this understanding among the thought leaders that we now lack and that we must have for success in regaining freedom to trade.

Each of us can, to this end, dedicate himself to the task of convincing several thought leaders among his friends of the reasons why this freedom is morally just and why the free market is the most efficient source of economic livelihood, liberty, and happiness. If this view of the justice and purpose of free exchange is right and if each of us becomes sufficiently well in-