

Consent is a journal of  
ideas and opinions  
on  
individual freedom.

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# Consent

## Education in The Marketplace

--- By Murray Hopper

(Mr. Hopper is a founding member of Freedom Party, now in charge of special projects.)

A free market provides a way of peaceably exchanging anything of value: goods, services, ideas, etc. The political requirement is a free democracy; the economic requirement is capitalism.

The marketplace transaction epitomizes freedom of choice: unless both the buyer and seller perceive a benefit, no trade will take place. There is no mystery here; almost daily we walk into a store, find what we want and buy it; if we cannot find what we want, we go elsewhere.

Note this: there is no coercion.

The alternative to the above (and its antithesis) is the enforced transaction, where we are compelled to sell goods at less than their true worth, or buy goods we do not want at any price. Fortunately, it is against the law for our fellow citizens to attempt to deal with us in such a way. Unfortunately, governments are under no such restraint.

Our educational systems today are based on government coercion. The fact that the student body is a captive audience frees educators from any urgent need to satisfy the wishes of their clientele. Pupils cannot "vote" with their feet; parents cannot "vote" with their tax dollars.

The recently released Radwanski report (Ontario Study of the Relevance of Education, and the Issue of Dropouts) and a study by the Business Task Force on Literacy are a litany of failure: the dropout rate is a "shame" the system particularly shortchanges children of working-class families; an overhaul is needed; illiteracy is costing us \$14

billion; and on and on. Curiously, in all the welter of claims, counterclaims, recommendations and criteria, far too numerous to discuss here, no mention is made of the one action essential to true reform, namely; an end to government monopoly.

As matters stand now, only well-to-do Canadians have any real choice in the matter of educating their children, and then only by paying twice: once for the public school system they do not want, and again for the alternative school that they prefer. The family of modest means has no such option; it takes what the state hands out.

In our day-to-day lives, the marketplace serves us well; it delivers everything from aardvarks to zebras, amethysts to zircons, and autoharps to zithers. Why not call on proven market mechanisms to modify the present monolithic public system?

Consider, for example, the advantage of being able to direct one's education tax dollars to the school of one's choice.

For generations now, Vermonters have been benefiting from a system whereby local governments use tax dollars to pay tuition at local private academies rather than providing education directly. Today 95 of Vermont's 246 towns have no "public" high school. In such cases, the school district must pay to any approved high school, in or out of state, an amount equal to average annual high school tuition (\$2,675 for 1983-84).

Consider these virtues of such a system: it offers real choice; it

*To those who consent, no injustice is done*



introduces competition; it eliminates any separate school problem; it encourages diversity.

Other steps forward might lead to further variety in educational structures such as teacher-owned co-ops, parent run co-ops, educational corporations, trade union schools, single proprietorships, restoration of the apprenticeship system, corporate grants and scholarships, etc.

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### **The marketplace transaction epitomizes freedom of choice.**

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In the United States, entrepreneurial challenges to state educational bureaucracies abound. Alternatives are now being offered in the form of franchised educational outlets. Sylvan Learning Centre, for example, has established programs in cities all over the U.S., along with its competitors, such as Huntington Learning Centres and American Learning Corp. These firms constitute a completely new presence in the educational market. Profit-oriented and innovative, these companies advertise that they can do in a few weeks what public schools take months to do. They make good on their claims too, as their balance sheets prove.

Clearly, the handwriting is on the wall for all "public" systems. As incomes and expectations rise over the years, and more and more parents and students choose to opt out of government systems, there will come a time when justice demands an end to coercion in the matter of education and a phasing out or a severe modification of traditional approaches.

If some are uncomfortable with the application of the profit motive to education, it may be because they do not understand the nature of that great generator. Profit goes only to those who have successfully complied with the capitalist maxim: find a need and fill it. The search for profit demands intelligence, hard work, persistence, and most of the other virtues that we admire in mankind. Profit eludes mediocrity or feeble effort.

You cannot achieve profit by raising prices; your competitors will clobber you. You cannot cut quality or service; your customers will desert you. The only way you can achieve profit is to cut costs. The one who is best at this is king of the marketplace: he is delivering the very highest quality at the lowest possible price. This is how "value" is defined.

Consider how smoothly and efficiently the common hamburger is made available. If you do not care to succumb to a "Big Mac attack," there's Burger King, Harvey's, Wendy's, and a host of other multinationals anxious for your business. If none of these appeal, there are a hundred restaurants, each with its own version of that particular culinary delight; and always, as a last resort - the back yard barbecue.

The reason for this happy state of affairs? Just this: no direct government intervention.

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### **Our educational systems today are based on government coercion.**

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If there are any who find this comparison inappropriate, let them consider this: the lowly hamburger fills that void in the middle in exactly the same way that education seeks to fill that other void a couple of feet higher up. The same method of delivery works for both the sublime and the commonplace, because common principles apply in each case.

While perfection is an illusory and unrealistic goal in the establishment of any economic or social arrangements, there is such a thing as a perfect market transaction in education. A couple of years ago, I had the pleasure of teaching one of my granddaughters to read. After Sunday dinners, we would play a little game involving the most common sound of each letter of the alphabet and the left-to-right linkage of these sounds. A few weeks of this and she was able to read simple sentences such as this one: "A cat bit a rat." She was not yet six. The perfection arises from this: the coinage was love.



# CAN WE SURVIVE "DEMOCRACY"?

## Part I: The Curse of Majority Rule

--- By Marc Emery & Robert Metz

(Mr. Emery and Mr. Metz are founding executive members of the Freedom Party.)

What is "democracy"?

Contrary to popular belief; "democracy" is not necessarily compatible with freedom! In fact, today's "democracies" may soon represent as great a threat to individual freedom as any dictatorship in the past ever has.

In determining the value of the process we call "democracy", it is essential that we first determine what the legitimate role of government is, and most importantly, what the rights of individuals are.

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**Individual freedom has never been won through the democratic process.**

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So let's begin by making our perspective on this issue clear: the proper purpose of government is to protect an individual's freedom of choice, not to restrict it.

Individual freedom is more important to the citizens of any nation than any economic or social "benefits" their governments may claim to provide, because without individual freedom, nothing else works and no social or economic benefits are possible.

Individual freedom simply means having the right to choose your own peaceful lifestyle and to be free to take any peaceful actions necessary to personal fulfillment. Live and let live. This type of freedom, which is essential to any civilized society, can only be protected by the legal entrenchment of private property rights which allow individuals to control their own lives, and which prevent them from controlling the lives of others.

Individual freedom and freedom of choice are at the heart of every political issue, but ironically --- only in a "democracy".

Our freedom of choice would not be an element of political discussion in a totalitarian state, where individual choice is explicitly denied. Likewise, our freedom of choice would not be a political issue in a free society, where individual choice is guaranteed us.

In a democracy, the constant political struggle is not over "how we can enhance freedom of choice for individuals", but over who shall make personal and economic choices and what they shall be. Regrettably, our system of "democracy" has deteriorated to the point where whatever the political struggle, it is no longer between individuals, but between governments, bureaucracies, organized lobby groups, and a host of other "organized" outgrowths of the "new democratic" philosophy of "Majority Rule".

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**Majority rule is not only inconsistent with individual freedom, but is its arch enemy.**

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Viewed from this critical perspective, "democracy" is far from what it has been presented to be. Through all our historical research on the subject, we have yet to discover any piece of federal, provincial, or municipal legislation enacted through the democratic process with the conscious intent of enhancing individual freedom. (Individual freedom has always been won through political resistance or revolution, never through the democratic process.)

Instead, each and every day, our own politicians and governments who comprise this "democracy" we all claim to cherish so much, create new and increasingly restrictive measures which diminish our individual freedoms, and which increase the powers of the state.

*Democracy is a form of religion. It is the worship of jackals by jackasses. --- H.L. Mencken*



Implicit in all social legislation created by the democratic process is the express use of force and compulsion as a means of preventing individuals from exercising choices inconsistent with government policies. Increasingly, those who hold views, opinions, economic preferences or lifestyles that are not held by the "majority" are finding themselves punished and restricted for being different.

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**The "freedom" to agree with the "majority" is no freedom at all for anyone.**

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This is the proof that pure democracy, practiced as majority rule, is not only inconsistent with individual freedom, but is its arch enemy. A fundamental of any free society is that freedom must apply equally to minority choices. Otherwise, freedom does not exist.

Think about it. The "freedom" to agree with the "majority" is no freedom at all for anyone. Individual freedom exists only when the smallest possible minority-- the individual --- has a legally protected right to the complete security of his peaceful actions, beliefs, and disposal of his property.

Consider the possible horrors of living in a society that only recognized the principle of majority rule democracy: What if 51% of voters, through some "democratic" process, decided to order the other 49% of voters to death? Would we, as citizens of a free country, accept this democratic decision?

An extreme example? Democracy doesn't mean that, you say?

Shoe



Good. Glad to hear it. Because that means you recognize that each individual has inalienable rights (i.e., rights not granted by governments, but rights recognized as being fundamental to individual survival and fulfillment), and that the first of these rights is the right to one's own life. So far, so good.

But is that the only right we have under a democracy? The right not to be arbitrarily killed? Or do we have other rights, rights consistent with individual freedom that no form of government, even a democracy, may abridge? If so, what are they? If not, why?

As you can see, the global political issue of our times is not: "Can democracy survive?" --- but rather, can we, as individuals, survive democracy? Can freedom survive?

In theory and in practice, majority-rule democracy is a political system of compromise between tyranny and individual freedom. Virtually all of today's political systems evolved from relatively tyrannical political systems (whether called divine monarchies, tribal societies, dictatorships, feudal societies, etc.) which only gave up their authority over individual freedom of choice in a piecemeal fashion, forced by the moral indignation and suffering of those few citizens who had either the understanding, the will, or the means to act.

Fortunately, most resistance against government oppression was carried out in a peaceful manner through public protests, meetings, underground press, etc.,--- methods particularly employed to avoid any democratic processes, and to avoid condemnation by the state. Only in rare, violent revolutions have entire political systems been destroyed, but for lack of an appreciation or understanding of individual freedom, these revolutions often were



followed by totalitarian regimes no different or worse than what was overthrown.

Yet, many might understandably ask that, if the process of democracy is such a threat to individual freedom, how is it that we have come to enjoy so much individual freedom, at least to a greater degree than has ever been possible before? Don't we live in a "democracy"?

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**Majority-rule democracy is a political system of compromise between tyranny and individual freedom.**

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Yes, we do. But the fact that some degree of individual freedom may exist within a democracy is no testament to the democratic process itself. Regrettably, individual freedoms within our democracy are only tolerated until they present a potential or perceived threat to the political ideal of "democracy", that is, to rule by the majority.

To explain this more clearly, let's examine what's been happening under our current political system of "social democracy": The democratic process that currently exists in Canada (and elsewhere) is, in practice, a political system that allows certain elements of society the privilege of conferring an unearned benefit upon themselves at the expense of others in society. Though we have been calling this process "majority rule", it is a historical irony that true majorities are extremely rare and virtually impossible to document or prove.

Usually, it's not a "majority" that is in control of the democratic process, but many competing minority political interests, all who claim to represent some undefined and unsubstantiated "majority". They know that the public at large has come to equate majority rule with democracy, which in turn, has become confused with individual freedom. As a consequence, lobby interests do not have to justify their demands on the grounds that what they may want is right or just; they only have to promote the numbers they represent as their badge of economic or

moral righteousness: "It's right because we have the numbers to prove it."

Thus, numbers, instead of ideas, morality, or individual choice, become the focus of political issues. It is in this way that our once much freer nation has fallen to what, increasingly, can only be accurately described as a sophisticated political system of mob rule. This is the inevitable consequence under any "democracy" that purports to hold "majority rule" as its highest ideal, by placing the whims of voters above their fundamental rights and freedoms.

We most often find this philosophy expressed in the statements: "It's for the common good," or "It's for the good of society," while in actual fact, the only "good" thing for all of society is the guaranteed protection of the individual freedoms of all its citizens. In stark contrast, our democratic process has been abused to barter away individual freedoms for the benefit of some vague, undefinable, socialistic notion of the "collective" good.

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**Majority-rule democracy operates in a moral vacuum.**

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As citizens within a majority-rule democracy, we must learn to understand that any rights and freedoms we currently enjoy exist only because governments know that a certain amount of individual freedom is necessary to get us to produce the economic and social benefits that they want to confiscate and "redistribute". Thus, while legitimate individual rights are being shattered, politicians are busy fabricating a set of artificial, bogus "rights", "rights" that give special privileges to some groups of people at the expense of other groups and individuals.

Rather than extending our freedom of action to pursue our individual choices, these "new democratic rights" impose arbitrary obligations on innocent and unwilling victims --- obligations to the beneficiaries of the democratic process.

New democratic rights like the "right to affordable housing" mean that some people are entitled to the benefit of



subsidized housing at the expense of responsible landlords, homeowners, and tenants alike. New democratic rights like the "right to a job" imposes an obligation on some employer to provide and pay for that job. In the process, the individual's legitimate right to work is denied, for fear he may compete with someone else's legislated "right" to a job. And let's not forget the increasingly popular democratic "right to decency", which imposes an obligation on others to suppress their personal lifestyles and choices, and which gives those claiming this "right" to make their choices for them.

These "new democratic" rights thus illustrate that the issues in a democracy revolve only around who gets to make our choices for us, and preclude the option that we as individuals should have the right to determine those choices ourselves. As these "democratic rights" become more entrenched through the democratic process, they change the meaning of the word "right" from one of "freedom of individual action" to "freedom from the responsibility for one's choices."

Needless to say, this makes the democratic process extremely attractive to a significant portion of the citizenry. Majority-rule democracy offers an opportunity to cash in on these new democratic "rights", and gives its supporters the power to impose obligations and commitments on others, while bearing less or no responsibility for their own actions.

Majority-rule democracy operates in a moral vacuum: it explicitly proclaims that "anything society does is right because society chose to do it."

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**Until now, you've been a well-pampered slave.**

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Any way you look at it, this is a moral and legal inversion of fundamental justice: While no responsibility is attached to those who advocate the violation of our individual freedoms, the obligation and cost of defending one's individual freedom is placed on those who

would have it denied them, despite the fact that such freedom should be theirs by right.

While advocates of individual freedom must spend thousands of their own dollars in our nation's courtrooms to defend their legitimate right to peaceful behaviour, those responsible for dragging them into those courtrooms are heralded as "champions" of the democratic process, and get to have the taxpayer fund their dubious causes for them.

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**The marketplace works despite majority-rule democracy, not because of it.**

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This democratic process of violating our individual rights is well under way. Consider how many of our individual freedoms we have already become conditioned to giving up for some undefinable "common good":

Right now, the average individual in Canada pays 52% of all his income to the over-100 taxes applied by various levels of government, making him virtually a slave to the state for half his adult lifetime.

Don't be too surprised if you don't feel like a slave; it's only because, until now, you've been a well-pampered slave, deriving many benefits like subsidized education or "free" health care, both temporarily paid for by putting our governments under a perpetual threat of bankruptcy. Consider that government debt is still accumulating despite the fact that over half of our personal earnings are already being confiscated. (Rapacious government-spending is yet another inevitable consequence of the majority-rule democratic process, whether in Canada or throughout the world.)

Another reason we may not feel physically burdened or "enslaved" by our democratic governments is that, even though more than half our earnings go to government, the portions of the marketplace that are still relatively free operate magnificently enough to provide us with the bountiful material comforts that can make life very enjoyable.

*If voting changed anything they'd make it illegal. --- Graffiti*



But we must never let ourselves forget: The marketplace works despite majority-rule democracy, not because of it.

The danger in forgetting this important point cannot be understated. Let's not be blinded to the origin and source of the abundance of goods, services, and products that we enjoy---man's free will, free enterprise, and individual freedom.

It is our ignorance of these fundamental human values that the

democratic process exploits so well. Yet, only a society of "free minds and free markets" can provide us with a greater abundance than all the political promises of the world combined. It is only through our willingness to understand why this is so that we can begin to reclaim our freedoms lost --- lost to the very process most of us think is protecting them.

#### NEXT ISSUE:

#### CAN WE SURVIVE DEMOCRACY?

#### Part II - Freedom Betrayed

#### The Inevitable Course of Majority-Rule

## POLITICAL BORDERS

### An Economic Myth

--- By Greg Jones

(Mr. Jones is a member of the Freedom Party of Ontario.)

The socialist parties would have us believe that the U.S.-Canada Free Trade Agreement is an abnormal, deviant arrangement, something Canadians should have no part of. So they have concocted economic myths to justify their opposition to free trade while concealing their real motive: to deny us our freedom of choice about what we can buy and where it comes from.

Given that there are those who consider it wrong for Canadians to trade with citizens of another geographic area, let's follow their argument to its logical conclusion:

Why shouldn't it be wrong for me, as a resident of Ontario, to do business with somebody in Quebec or Manitoba? Better still, why not restrict trade between municipalities, or better yet, why not divide each town and city right down the middle and make it difficult or illegal for residents of the west side to do business with residents of the east side? After all, those west-side residents could be supplying better products at lower prices and driving us east-side folks out of our jobs! Whatever logic holds for North America should hold for provinces, states, or municipalities, shouldn't it?

Silly, isn't it? Yet, many citizens of many countries accept this nationalistic view of free trade, an

activity upon which every individual must rely to simply survive, let alone prosper.

Free trade is a natural extension of a person's right to choose for himself what to do with his own life and property. The fact that a person or business with whom one may wish to trade resides in another part of the world bears no relevance; the only thing that really matters is the consent of the buyer and seller.

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**Free Trade takes power out of the hands of governments and puts it in the hands of the individual, where it belongs.**

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To suggest that "freer trade" between the U.S. and Canada would "destroy" this country is an economic contradiction. Free trade is nothing more than the legal acknowledgement and protection of any mutually beneficial trade of goods and services between the citizens of two or more nations. By definition, this means that neither party would enter any trade transaction unless each side considered it sufficiently advantageous.

No one in either country would be forced to sell or purchase any product or service for any reason if it is not in his

*The ghastly thing about postal strikes is that after they are over, the service returns to normal. --- Richard Needham*



or her own best interest. This is the real reason Broadbent and Turner oppose the deal. The Free Trade Agreement takes power out of the hands of governments and puts it in the hands of the individual, where it belongs.

Let's face it. Most politicians exist for the sole purpose of dictating how we should live our lives in every area from Sunday shopping to what we can legally read or write. The last thing they want to see is Canadians trading happily, independantly, and successfully --- to

mutual advantage, but not to the advantage of politicians --- across a border. Why? Because such an occurrence would demonstrate both the value and the power of individual freedom of choice. It would demonstrate clearly, once and for all, that these politicians and their continually restrictive laws are not only unnecessary, but harmful to the citizens who are made subject to them.

That is what the enemies of free trade really fear.

## THE JOKES ON US!

*A humorous look at the words which shape politics.*

Agnostic: A Godfearing atheist.

Anarchy: The absence of government and the resulting state of utter chaos as hordes of former government employees run amuck - rioting, looting, raping and pillaging.

B-1: A vitamin essential to the health of the military industrial complex.

Bermuda Triangle, the: A section of the western Atlantic, off the southeast coast of the United States, where truth has mysteriously vanished into thin air.

Bilingual: Able to utter doubletalk in two languages (a prerequisite in Canadian politics).

Bureaucracy: A perpetual inertia machine.

Censor: One who enlightens the world by burning books.

Common Knowledge: Something generally known among the ignorant.

Democracy: Government of the sheep, by the sheperds, for the wolves.

Dictatorship: Government by force and

*(Exerpts from: Lucifer's Lexicon Published by: Loompanics Unlimited, P.O. Box 1197, Port Townsend, WA 98368)*

fraud, as opposed to democracy, government by fraud and force.

Fabian: A creeping socialist.

Heresy: Disagreement with the One True Lie.

Holy War: A war, for God's sake.

Hypocrit: One who practices vice while preaching versa.

Labor Union: An association of workers organized to advance the interests of the union organizers.

Leader: In politics, one who follows his nose into other people's affairs.

Liberal: One whose heart bleeds when the Federal budget is cut.

Pacifist: One who, when kicked in the ass, turns the other cheek.

Punk Rock: Proof that kids do say the darndest things.

School Spirit: Ardent loyalty to the school one is forced to attend.

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