



Liberty, Larry Reed and Facebook, Part 2

Nonoy Oplas

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Introduction

This is the sequel to the earlier paper, “Liberty, Larry Reed and Facebook”, posted in the MG website, March 26, 2010. It was about beautiful quotes on liberty and individual rights from various thinkers that Larry Reed, President of the Foundation for Economic Education (FEE, www.fee.org) in the US, posted in his facebook status.

This sequel is a continuation of that effort. It is difficult to survey a big volume of literatures on individual liberty because of a big number of articulate free market thinkers who have written on the subject. Larry Reed has simplified that search and survey.

Readers will find inspiration and hope in fighting for individual liberty and asserting personal responsibility, from the continued onslaught of statism and growing power of the already big governments around the world. All the best intentions and motherhood statements by people who promise endless welfare and subsidies to the poor and favored sectors in society will only end up perpetuating poverty and powerlessness as individual freedom is crippled.

Enjoy reading!

"When a new source of taxation is found it never means, in practice, that the old source is abandoned. It merely means that the politicians have two ways of milking the taxpayer where they had one before"
-- H. L. Mencken.

"It is error alone which needs the support of government. Truth can stand by itself"
- Thomas Jefferson.

"Everyone wants to live at the expense of the state. They forget that the state lives at the expense of everyone"
-- Frederic Bastiat, author of the must-read classic, "The Law."

"It is precisely those things which belong to 'the people' which have historically been despoiled—wild creatures, the air, and waterways being notable examples. This goes to the heart of why property rights are socially important in the first place. Property rights mean self-interested monitors....No one kills the goose that lays the golden egg when it is his goose"
-- Thomas Sowell.

"No free people can lose their liberties while they are jealous of liberty. But the liberties of the freest people are in danger when they set up symbols of liberty as fetishes, worshipping the symbol instead of the principle it represents"
-- 19th Century abolitionist Wendell Phillips.

"The spirit of liberty is not merely, as multitudes imagine, a jealousy of our own particular rights, but a respect for the rights of others, and an unwillingness that any man, whether high or low, should be wronged and trampled under foot"
-- William Ellery Channing.

"It has often been found that profuse expenditures, heavy taxation, absurd commercial restrictions, corrupt tribunals, disastrous wars, seditions, persecutions, conflagrations, inundation, have not been able to destroy capital so fast as the exertions of private citizens have been able to create it"
-- Thomas Babington Macauley.

"The Emperor angrily demanded of him, 'How dare you molest the seas?' To which the pirate replied, 'How dare you molest the whole world? Because I do it with a small boat, I am called a pirate and a thief. You, with a great navy, molest the world and are called an emperor'"
-- from St. Augustine's "City of God." Thanks to FB friends Alex Chafuen, John Inderdohnen and Zac Gochenour.

"We hang the petty thieves and appoint the great ones to public office"
-- attributed to Aesop, though this is not, alas, a fable.

"You cannot carry on forever squeezing the productive bit of the economy in order to fund an unprecedented engorgement of the unproductive bit. You cannot spend your way out of recession or borrow your way out of debt"
-- Daniel Hannan, British member of the European Parliament.

"Government is like a baby: An alimentary canal with a big appetite at one end and no sense of responsibility at the other"
-- Ronald Reagan.

"Whenever people talk glibly of a need to achieve educational 'excellence,' I think of what an improvement it would be if our public schools could just achieve mediocrity"
-- Thomas Sowell.

"It is hard to imagine a more stupid or more dangerous way of making decisions than by putting those decisions in the hands of people who pay no price for being wrong"
-- Thomas Sowell.

"It is the highest impertinence and presumption...in kings and ministers, to pretend to watch over the economy of private people, and to restrain their expense....They are themselves always, and without any exception, the greatest spendthrifts in the society. Let them look well after their own expense, and they may safely trust private people with theirs"
-- Adam Smith.

"The welfare state is not really about the welfare of the masses. It is about the egos of the elites"
-- Thomas Sowell.

"A general dissolution of principles and manners will more surely overthrow the liberties of America than the whole force of the common enemy. While the people are virtuous, they cannot be subdued; but when once they lose their virtue they will be ready to surrender their liberties to the first external or internal invader"
-- Sam Adams, letter to James Warren, February 12, 1779."

"Nothing is more certain than that a general profligacy and corruption of manners make a people ripe for destruction"
-- John Witherspoon in "The Dominion of Providence Over the Passions of Men," 1776.

"All men having power ought to be distrusted to a certain degree"
-- James Madison, in a speech to the Constitutional Convention, July 11, 1787.

"I swore never to be silent whenever human beings endure suffering and humiliation. We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented"
-- Elie Weisel.

"And in spite of the cunning of artful political leaders, these three gifts from God [individuality, liberty, property] precede all human legislation, and are superior to it. Life, liberty, and property do not exist because men have made laws. On the contrary, it was the fact that life, liberty, and property existed... beforehand that caused men to make laws in the first place"
-- Frederic Bastiat.

Parents can only give good advice or put them on the right paths, but the final forming of a person's character lies in their own hands"
-- Holocaust victim Anne Frank, whose diary remains one of the most powerful tributes to liberty and the human spirit ever written.

The great merit of gold is precisely that it is scarce; that its quantity is limited by nature; that it is costly to discover, to mine, and to process; and that it cannot be created by political fiat or caprice"
-- economist Henry Hazlitt, author of the classic "Economics in One Lesson."

"The less government we have the better--fewer laws and less power. The antidote to ... abuse of formal government is the influence of private character, the growth of the individual"
-- Ralph Waldo Emerson.

"The only difference between death and taxes is that death doesn't get worse every time Congress meets"
-- Will Rogers.

"Dependence begets subservience and venality, suffocates the germ of virtue, and prepares fit tools for the designs of ambition"
-- Thomas Jefferson, 1787. This is why statisticians like Obama want nationalized health care.

"What is called economic progress is the joint effect of the activities of the savers, the scientist-inventors, and the entrepreneurs, operating in a market economy"
-- Ludwig von Mises. What, politicians aren't included? How can that be?! Don't they stimulate us? My unionized government school teachers said they did. Now I have to rethink this.

"Freedom of speech of private individuals includes the right to not agree, not to listen, and not to finance one's own antagonists"
-- Ayn Rand.

"The kind of man who wants the government to adopt and enforce his ideas is always the kind of man whose ideas are idiotic"
-- H. L. Mencken.

"Don't go around saying the world owes you a living. The world owes you nothing. It was here first"
-- Mark Twain.

"A rational man never distorts or corrupts his own standards and judgment in order to appeal to the irrationality, stupidity, or dishonesty of others"
-- Ayn Rand.

"A politician is an animal which can sit on a fence and yet keep both ears to the ground"
-- H. L. Mencken.

"Among the natural rights of the colonists are these: first, a right to life; secondly, to liberty; thirdly to property; together with the right to support and defend them in the best manner they can"
-- Sam Adams.

"Power-lust is a weed that grows only in the vacant lots of an abandoned mind"
— Ayn Rand.

"Why doesn't everybody leave everybody else the hell alone?"
-- the late, great comedian Jimmy Durante ("the schnoz").

Force and reason -- which last is the essence of the moral act -- are at the two opposite poles. The one who compels his neighbor... treats him, not as a being with reason, but as an animal in whom reason is not"
-- Auberon Herbert, 19th Century British "voluntaryist."

"There is a fundamental conviction which some people never acquire, some hold only in their youth, and a few hold to the end of their days—the conviction that ideas matter That ideas matter means that knowledge matters, that truth matters, that one's mind matters"
– Ayn Rand.

"Character--the willingness to accept responsibility for one's own life--is the source from which self-respect springs"
-- novelist Joan Didion.

"You don't PAY taxes—they TAKE taxes"
-- comedian Chris Rock.

"Liberty must at all hazards be supported. We have a right to it, derived from our Maker. But if we had not, our fathers have earned and bought it for us, at the expense of their ease, their estates, their pleasure and their blood"
– John Adams, 1765.

"When the first cave man clubbed his neighbor to expropriate the food his neighbor had gathered, he gave blunt, physical expression to the essence of socialist society"
– Lawrence W. Reed (1978).

"Politics: A strife of interests masquerading as a contest of principles. The conduct of public affairs for private advantage"
-- journalist and short story author Ambrose Bierce.

"Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States where men were free"
-- Ronald Reagan.

"If the natural tendencies of mankind are so bad that it is not safe to permit people to be free, how is it that the tendencies of these organizers are always good? Do not the legislators and their appointed agents also belong to the human race? Or do they believe that they themselves are made of a finer clay than the rest of mankind?"
-- Frederic Bastiat.

"It is easy to be conspicuously 'compassionate' if others are being forced to pay the cost"
-- the late Murray Rothbard, a great economist of the "Austrian" School and author of "Man, Economy and State," "For a New Liberty," "America's Great Depression," etc.

"Money will not buy intelligence for the fool, or admiration for the coward, or respect for the incompetent. The man who attempts to purchase the brains of his superiors to serve him, with his money replacing his judgment, ends up by becoming the victim of his inferiors"
– from Francisco D'Anconia's "money speech" in Ayn Rand's "Atlas Shrugged."

"Perhaps it is time to relegate to superstition the idea that government should manage money and get on to the task at hand—putting money back under the command of the marketplace where it belongs"
-- Lawrence W. Reed (1981).

"God grant that not only the love of liberty but a thorough knowledge of the rights of man may pervade all the nations of the earth, so that a philosopher may set his foot anywhere on its surface and say: This is my country"
-- Benjamin Franklin.

A free America means just this: individual freedom for all, rich or poor, or else this system of government we call democracy is only an expedient to enslave man to the machine and make him like it"
-- architect Frank Lloyd Wright.

"Moral cowardice that keeps us from speaking our minds is as dangerous to this country as irresponsible talk. The right way is not always the popular and easy way. Standing for right when it is unpopular is a true test of moral character"
-- Senator Margaret Chase Smith of Maine.

"Prosperity or egalitarianism – you have to choose. I favor freedom – you never achieve real equality anyway, you simply sacrifice prosperity for an illusion"
-- Peruvian novelist Mario Vargas Llosa.

"It is not conclusive proof of a doctrine's correctness that its adversaries use the police, the hangman, and violent mobs to fight it. But it is a proof of the fact that those taking recourse to violent oppression are in their subconscious convinced of the untenability of their own doctrines"
-- Ludwig von Mises.

"When a government controls both the economic power of individuals and the coercive power of the state, this violates a fundamental rule of happy living: Never let the people with all the money and the people with all the guns be the same people"
-- P. J. O'Rourke.

"As long as judges tinker with the Constitution to 'do what the people want,' instead of what the document actually commands, politicians who pick and confirm new federal judges will naturally want only those who agree with them politically"
-- Justice Antonin Scalia.

"History fails to record a single precedent in which nations subject to moral decay have not passed into political and economic decline. There has been either a spiritual awakening to overcome the moral lapse, or a progressive deterioration leading to ultimate national disaster"
-- General Douglas MacArthur.

"Three groups spend other people's money: children, thieves, politicians. All three need supervision"

-- former Texas congressman Dick Armev.

"The legitimate powers of government extend to such acts as are only injurious to others. But it does me no injury for my neighbor to say there are twenty gods, or no God. It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg"

-- Thomas Jefferson.

"Government proposes, bureaucracy disposes. And the bureaucracy must dispose of government proposals by dumping them on us"

-- P. J. O'Rourke.

"The public good is in nothing more essentially interested, than in the protection of every individual's private rights"

- famed 18th Century British jurist Sir William Blackstone.

"Since when have we Americans been expected to bow submissively to authority and speak with awe and reverence to those who represent us?"

-- Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, who was on the wrong side most of the time but got it right when he said this.

"In order to become the master, the politician poses as the servant"

-- Charles de Gaulle, former French president and WWII general.

"Throughout history, the attachment of even the humblest people to their freedom has come as an unpleasant shock to condescending ideologues"

-- historian Paul Johnson.

"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery"

-- Galatians 5:1

"Men in authority will always think that criticism of their policies is dangerous. They will always equate their policies with patriotism, and find criticism subversive"

-- the late historian Henry Steele Commager.

"Do not hold the delusion that your advancement is accomplished by crushing others"

-- the ancient Roman statesman Cicero.

"I feel obliged to withhold my approval of the plan to indulge in benevolent and charitable sentiment through the appropriation of public funds...I find no warrant for such an appropriation in the Constitution"

-- from his veto in 1887 of the Texas Seed Bill by President Grover Cleveland, who vetoed more bills than all the previous 21 presidents combined.

"The welfare state, in its rage for egalitarianism, gives its citizens the status and opportunities of slaves, but calls on them to act like heroes"

-- economist and philosopher Wilhelm Ropke (thanks to Lukus Collins).

"There are only two means by which men can deal with one another: guns or logic. Force or persuasion. Those who know that they cannot win by means of logic, have always resorted to guns"

-- Ayn Rand.

I believe the Prince of Darkness could start a branch of hell in the District of Columbia, if he has not already done it, and carry it on unimpeached by the Congress of the United States, even though the Constitution were bristling with articles forbidding hells in this country"

-- Mark Twain, Letter to Virginia City Territorial Enterprise, April 7, 1868

"Any society that would give up a little liberty to gain a little security will deserve neither and lose both"

-- widely attributed to Benjamin Franklin, but unverified.

"A ruler who lacks understanding is a great oppressor, but he who hates covetousness will prolong his days"

-- Proverbs 28: 16.

On statesmanship: "The difference between a politician and a statesman is a politician thinks of the next election and a statesman thinks of the next generation" (James Freeman Clarke); "A statesman is a politician who's been dead 10 or 15 years" (Harry Truman).

"Freedom is not worth having if it does not connote freedom to err"

-- Mahatma Gandhi.

"I think we have more machinery of government than is necessary, too many parasites living on the labor of the industrious"

-- Thomas Jefferson, Letter to William Ludlow, September 6, 1824.

"If a man has the right to self-ownership, to the control of his life, then in the real world he must also have the right to sustain his life by grappling with and transforming resources; he must be able to own the ground and the resources on which he stands and which he must use. In short, to sustain his human right"

-- economist Murray Rothbard.

"The practical reason for freedom is that freedom seems to be the only condition under which any kind of substantial moral fiber can be developed. We have tried law, compulsion and authoritarianism of various kinds, and the result is nothing to be proud of"

-- Albert Jay Nock.

"For what avail the plough or sail, or land or life, if freedom fail?"
-- from Ralph Waldo Emerson's "Boston," stanza 15.

"The man who refuses to judge, who neither agrees nor disagrees, who declares that there are no absolutes and believes that he escapes responsibility, is the man responsible for all the blood that is now spilled in the world"
-- Ayn Rand.

"We become just by the practice of just actions, self-controlled by exercising self-control, and courageous by performing acts of courage"
-- Aristotle.

"The Republic was not established by cowards; and cowards will not preserve itThis will remain the land of the free only so long as it is the home of the brave"
-- Elmer Davis.

"If you mind your own business, you won't be minding mine"
-- Hank Williams.

Force and reason -- which last is the essence of the moral act -- are at the two opposite poles. The one who compels his neighbor... treats him, not as a being with reason, but as an animal in whom reason is not"
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