

Would you like to live in a society of peace, prosperity and freedom? Would you like to earn a lot more money than your parents, be free to do whatever you want so long as it doesn't harm others, and see the threats of violence and war largely disappear? Would you like to live in an age of artistic freedom and rapid scientific progress in which anything seems possible?

Such a world is not only possible – it is a part of our history. For nearly fifty years, between the end of the Civil War in 1865 and the beginning of World War I in 1914, the United States was the freest, most prosperous society on earth. Living standards rose nearly 5% a year. The average American's income was *six times* higher at the end of the period than at the beginning.

There was little restriction upon personal, economic and artistic freedom. There was no income tax, no military draft, little government regulation of business, and no prohibition of drugs.

Independent schools and private charities made education available for all, and helped those in need. And, except for the brief Spanish-American War, the nation enjoyed the longest period without foreign wars in our history. Nearly anything seemed possible. Illiterate immigrants who started with a pushcart became millionaires through hard work.

## **Living standards are falling and violence has become epidemic**

Today's America is far removed from the America of the late 19th century, both in time and in spirit. Some citizens are certainly doing well. But many are having trouble making ends meet.

After adjusting for inflation, average take-home pay is now lower than it was 40 years ago. Hidden inflation, high taxes and regulations are crippling our economy.

Few young adults can now afford to buy their own homes, save for their children's education, or build security for their retirement. Essential infrastructure is also crumbling including vital roads, bridges, power and water systems.

Violence – much of it unreported -- has become epidemic. Murder is now the leading cause of death among young black men. Many college women report they were the victim of rape or attempted rape. And nearly 25% of all American families are now victimized by theft or vandalism every year.

The threat of superpower warfare has declined. But weapons of mass destruction – chemical,

biological and nuclear – continue to spread to the world's most repressive regimes and militias, many of them supported by US military and economic aid.

## **Liberty is Required for Any Peaceful & Prosperous Society**

What has changed in America in the last 100 years? Why has this nation changed from one of the most prosperous and progressive on earth to one of increasing anxiety, deterioration and violence. The reason is that we have largely abandoned our *libertarian* heritage.

Thomas Jefferson, George Washington and America's other founders understood the values required for a free, peaceful and prosperous society: individual liberty, economic freedom, and limited government.

Liberty means the freedom to control your own life, to work and play as you choose, to keep what you earn, to speak freely, and to associate voluntarily with others.

Liberty can flourish only in an environment of tolerance, voluntary association, and mutual respect for the lives and property of others. You can have liberty for yourself only if you grant it freely to everyone else.

The genius of America was that our government was created as a *protector* of our fundamental human rights. America's founders well understood that government's immense power can be used to destroy as well as to protect; that when government uses force against its own peaceful citizens, it becomes just another criminal gang. Our Constitution and Bill of Rights were designed to protect us *from government*.

Our libertarian ideal, that government exists to protect our rights, was never fully realized. Our legislatures, police and military have frequently crossed the line from defenders of our liberty to violators. But the previously slow erosion of our rights has recently become a raging torrent, and our heritage of liberty is being rapidly obliterated.

## **The Government Now Takes 70% of Your Income**

If you're typical, you now spend nearly five months a year working to earn enough just to pay your direct taxes. And that's only the beginning.

According to Dr. James Payne's study, ***Costly Returns: The Burdens of the US Tax System***, for every dollar that the IRS collects in taxes, we pay an additional 65 cents in compliance costs – tax accountants, attorneys, tax software, etc.

When you add the 40% of your income you pay directly in taxes, 20% you pay *indirectly* in compliance costs, and another 13% you lose as a result of economic regulations, ***over 70% of your income is now taken from you by the government.***

## **Our Economy is Being Crippled by Stifling Regulations**

In Los Angeles, it takes dozens of licenses and permits to open a small business. In Washington, DC it costs \$10,000 to operate a pushcart. In New York City, a "medallion" to operate a taxicab costs over \$600,000.

In Hawaii, a homeless man who tried to earn a little cash by taking pictures of tourists with his pet parrot, was arrested and his parrot confiscated because he didn't have a business license.

Over 80,000 pages of new regulations are now published in the Federal Register every year. That's in addition to tens of thousands of new *state* and *local* regulations every year.

Goods and services that could improve your life are being banned, confiscated, and regulated out of existence by the 29 million Americans who now work for government.

## **Everything You Own Can Be Confiscated by Police Without Trial**

You no longer have a right to your own property. Over 400 federal and thousands of state civil asset forfeiture laws, authorize police to confiscate everything you own without trial or even without charging you with a crime.

➤ In Volusia County, Florida, police regularly stop motorists and ask "How much cash are you carrying?" If the answer is more than a few hundred dollars, they routinely seize it, along with your car, if it's an expensive one. In four years, these legal "highway robberies" have brought in over \$8 million for Volusia County.

In Washington, DC, police confiscated the home of Helen Hoyle, a 69-year-old grandmother. Police claimed an informant told them Helen's grandson sold drugs from her front porch *two years earlier*.

Cars, homes, businesses, pocket cash, bank accounts, and pensions are now confiscated from over 5,000 *innocent* Americans like you every week. According to a Pittsburgh Press study, in 80% of the cases no one is ever charged with a crime.

Even if you are totally innocent of any crime, there is little chance you will ever get your confiscated

property back. Under civil-forfeiture laws *you are presumed guilty*, and you must prove your innocence and pay \$5,000 – \$100,000+ in legal expenses out of your own pocket – *after* your home, bank accounts or business have been seized.

## Police Can Now Beat or Kill You with Virtual Impunity

According to “60 Minutes,” Oakland, California Housing Authority Police routinely rob public housing residents, plant drugs on them, beat them, and then arrest them. In Oakland, on an average night, 42 people are admitted to hospital emergency rooms after police beatings. But they’re lucky.

In California, “Multimillionaire rancher Donald Scott, 61, was shot to death when 26 DEA agents, LA County sheriffs’ deputies and National Park Service officers raided his 200-acre Malibu spread looking for marijuana they never found.”

“Annie Rae Dixon, 84, bedridden with pneumonia in Tyler, Texas, [was] shot to death by police in a 2 AM raid last January. An officer said his pistol accidentally went off when he kicked down her bedroom door. No drugs were found.” (Both quotes from *USA Today*, 1/11/93.)

There are now dozens of such deadly police “mistakes” every week. If an anonymous informant claims without proof that you have illegal drugs or firearms in your possession, that now gives police a virtual license to kill you and your family.

## To Restore Prosperity, Freedom, and Peace to America, We Must Restore Our Libertarian Heritage

We must return to the principles of tolerance and respect for the rights of others. Activities that are crimes for individuals – theft, assault, kidnapping, intimidation and murder – must be crimes for government agents as well.

The crushing burden of confiscatory taxes, massive hidden inflation, and suffocating regulations must be lifted from our economy.

As the revolutions that swept Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union demonstrated, even authoritarian governments require the consent of the governed. America can again be a land of liberty and unlimited opportunity. This is what America once was and can be again. Millions of American libertarians invite you to join us to restore our liberty.

*Jarret Wollstein is a co-founder of the original Society for Individual Liberty, one of the predecessors of Liberty International.*

## HELP BUILD A BETTER WORLD

**Our Mission:** Liberty International is building a worldwide movement of individuals and organizations working to bring about the benefits of a free and peaceful world, respect for individual rights and liberties, and an open economic system based on voluntary exchange and free trade.

Since 1982, LI has organized 33 **World Conferences** that has inspired many new networks, organizations and publishing projects...**Conference Scholarships** for hundreds of students and young activists from the ex-Soviet bloc – who are spreading liberty ideas to millions...**Economics Seminars in China** – annual high-level seminars reaching 100+ top students each year...**Liberty English Camps** that have reached 5,000 students in 30 countries and created many new activists...**Book Translations** that are spreading the liberty message in over 50 languages around the world... **Website Resources** like this paper and many other articles and videos to inform and inspire people everywhere.

**Help Liberty International bring about a freer, better world for all of us by joining LI today!**

A \$35 Basic annual membership brings you: **LI News** weekly electronic bulletins with news from our world network...**Print LI Updates** ...**On-Line Resources** - access to articles, videos and an international directory of liberty organizations...**LI Membership Card** in the “world freedom family”...**tax deductions** in the USA for LI contributions.

**NOTE:** Distribution of this pamphlet via other organizations shall not construe endorsement or opposition by Liberty International regarding any particular legislation or political campaign.



**Liberty International**

237 Kearny St. #120,  
San Francisco, CA 94108-4502, USA  
+415-859-5174 [info@liberty-intl.org](mailto:info@liberty-intl.org)

# Libertarianism

## The Path to Peace, Prosperity and Freedom



*by Jarret B. Wollstein*

---

– LI EDUCATIONAL PAMPHLET SERIES –

---