

Hurt for Hurt

Japan does impose numerous restrictions on trade—though in recent years she has been reducing them. Those trade restrictions hurt Japan and they hurt us—by denying them and us mutually profitable trade. In Japan no less than in the U.S., concentrated producers exert a greater influence on government than widely diffused consumers and are able to persuade the government to fleece the consumer for the benefit of the producers.

However, we only increase the hurt to us—and also to them—by imposing additional restrictions in our turn. The wise course for us is precisely the op-

posite—to move unilaterally toward free trade. If they still choose to impose restrictions, that is too bad but at least we have not added insult to injury.

This is clearly the right course for action on economic grounds. But it is also the only course of action that is in keeping with our political position in the world. We are a great nation, the leader of the free world. Yet we squander our political power to appease the textile industry in the Carolinas! We should instead be setting a standard for the world by practicing the freedom of competition, of trade and of enterprise that we preach.

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Property Rights Basic to Human Rights

THE Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies has an executive group of business and professional men examining widely held beliefs.

A specific question before the executive seminar and also before leading scientists and philosophies is, when the pursuit of unrestrained (economic) expansion raises intolerable threats to the quality of human life, and if the doctrine of no growth is politically and morally unacceptable, how do we determine the desirable direction for economic development in the future?

Two widely held beliefs to be examined are: (1) air and water are free commodities, and (2) most land and resources on it and under it may be used in accordance with the unrestricted desires of its private owners.

These deep questions may well be resolved by defining property rights, asking first, does man belong to himself or to God, or can he belong to another person?

If a man belongs to himself this is

truly a basis for human rights, and then it follows that the products of his labor are his and he may sell or give his contribution to the productive process as he sees fit.

This is a far reaching conclusion, for man did not create our planet. Man may be said to live on land holding it in trust for further generations. His human rights to all he produces on land then are subject to his observing the equal right of all other human beings to "his" land.

This is quite different from English Common Law by which monarchs granted titles in perpetuity to their friends. How did the monarchs retain such rights? By getting "subjects" to fight for it, against other human beings, some of them other monarchs.

If human rights are defined as the right of a man to himself and his contribution to production, then protection of this right is the only possible basis for property rights.

—LANCASTER M. GREENE

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