



ISSN 1522- 5668

Journal of Religion & Society

The Kripke Center

Volume 23 (2021)

The Malediction of a “False Idea of Freedom”

Angus Sibley, Paris, France

Abstract

Today, freedom is often seen as a negative quality, relieved of constraints and unhitched from morality. This libertarian concept of freedom clashes with more positive notions of freedom as “power to do good,” found in classical philosophy and in traditional religions. We note resonances between the author’s Catholic position and concepts of freedom proposed by Aristotle and by ancient and modern Jewish writers who argue that true freedom is not amoral, but is inseparable from justice and from private and civic virtue. While oppressive or inappropriate constraints can obviously damage our freedom, well-chosen constraints can enhance it, and are necessary for a fair and humane society. We consider firstly some basic philosophical notions of freedom and, in general terms, their practical consequences; secondly the implications for our economies and societies of how freedom is understood and practiced; finally, some considerations on what a positive and moral concept of freedom implies for political issues and public policy.

Keywords: negative freedom, positive freedom, justice, redistribution, association.

Concepts of Freedom

What Do We Mean by “Freedom”?

Around 350 BCE, thus wrote Aristotle (Politics, 1310a):

In democracies of the more extreme type there has arisen a false idea of freedom which is contrary to the true interests of the state . . . Men think . . . that freedom means the doing what a man likes. In such democracies everyone lives as he pleases, or in the words of Euripedes, “according to his

fancy." But this is all wrong; men should not think it slavery to live according to the rule of the constitution; for it is their salvation.

The phrase "rule of the constitution" translates *politeia*, which can also mean "the way of life of a citizen"; so we may read this text as meaning that we find our freedom by living within the bounds of good citizenship, thus having regard to the common good as well as to individual desire or ambition. Moreover, a good constitution, according to Aristotle (*Politics*, 1279a), is one that aims at the common advantage: "governments which have a regard to the common interest are constituted in accordance with strict principles of justice, and are therefore true forms."

From a Christian perspective, it would seem that the sin of Adam and Eve was an offence of the type described by Aristotle. They felt "free" to act "according to their fancy" by eating the forbidden fruit, thus failing to respect the "constitution" of Eden. Could it be that a "false idea of freedom" lies at the root of our self-inflicted earthly troubles?

In a famous discourse delivered in 1848 at Notre-Dame de Paris, Henri-Dominique Lacordaire (1861, 643) preached that "between the strong and the weak, between rich and poor, between master and servant, it is freedom that is oppressive and the law that sets free." But, in 1802, English philosopher of law and sociology Jeremy Bentham (1931, 94), an atheist who opposed all forms of religion, claimed that "every law is an evil, for every law is an infraction of liberty."

Rabbi Abraham Heschel (1966, 15) wrote that "man is free in doing good; he is not free in doing evil. To choose evil is to fail to be free." But Murray Rothbard (2006, 9), an anarcho-capitalist and non-observant Jew, insisted that "the libertarian stands foursquare for the freedom . . . to engage in such 'victimless crimes' as pornography, sexual deviation and prostitution."

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (hereafter "the Catechism") says (no. 1733) that "the more one does what is good, the freer one becomes. There is no true freedom except in the service of what is good and just" and (no. 1740) that "by deviating from the moral law man violates his own freedom." But the Viennese economist Friedrich von Hayek (1960, 79), who came from a Catholic family but turned atheist, asserted that:

philosophers have sometimes defined freedom as action in conformity with moral rules. But this definition of freedom is a denial of that freedom with which we are concerned. The freedom of action that is a condition of moral merit includes the freedom to act wrongly.

Clearly, we use the words "freedom" or "liberty" with diverse meanings; perhaps too diverse.

Two Common Understandings of Freedom

Many of our various ideas of freedom fall into one or other of two categories: negative and positive freedoms. The first of these was neatly defined by von Hayek (1960, 17): "to be precise, we should probably define liberty as the absence of restraint and constraint." He explained that by restraint he meant being prohibited from doing something, while by constraint he meant being obliged to do something; and that he meant being prohibited or

obliged *by the will of other people*, especially the people who govern us, not by impersonal forces or events. Thus, using an analogy from mountaineering in his native Austria, he claimed (1960, 12–13) that the climber who finds himself stuck in a crevasse is “not unfree,” since he has not been willfully confined there by anyone else.

This *negative freedom* contrasts with *positive freedom*, of which one of the simplest and best definitions was given by Bernhard Häring (1961, 1.99):

In essence freedom is the power to do good. The power to do evil is not of its essence. Freedom is present only where there is the power to overcome evil. Indifference to good or evil is not a quality of liberty as such, but only of the finite and limited liberty of man. The power to do good, however, derives from the likeness of man to God, from the created participation in the divine freedom.

This text accords with definition in the Catechism quoted above.

Distinguishing between Negative and Positive Freedoms

In political or economic terms, the difference between these two understandings of freedom was vigorously described by the French cooperativist Louis Blanc (1811–1882). Negative freedom, for him, was the abstract notion of freedom considered as rights, as they are defined in charters and constitutions; positive freedom was the power or capacity in practice to live as one should be able to live. Thus (1847, 19):

Rights, in the abstract, are the mirage that has held the people under abuse since 1789 . . . It is because freedom has been defined as *rights* that we have come to say that men are free, though they be slaves of hunger, cold, ignorance or chance. So let us state, once and for all: freedom consists not only in the RIGHTS accorded [by our constitution] but in the POWER given to man to act, to develop his capacities, under the empire of justice and under the protection of the law.

Blanc ridicules the pursuit of freedom simply as *laissez faire*, which he calls (1847, 16) “wild freedom” (*liberté de l'état sauvage*); this, he argues, is but an “abominable oppression.” For if every individual is “free” to do as he pleases, then, in the absence of countervailing factors, the stronger individuals are “free” to take advantage of the weaker ones.

In our own times, the distinguished Indian economist Amartya Sen has described (1999, 96) our two contrasting conceptions of freedom on essentially similar lines:

Individual freedom includes, firstly, those positive elements that make us capable of acting as autonomous and responsible individuals, such as essential healthcare, the guarantee of a basic education, a decent standard of living that excludes famine and absolute poverty, etc. It includes also our autonomy and our fundamental liberties, such as the freedom and the possibility of participating in the political and social processes that affect our everyday life. This double perspective highlights the values of both positive and negative freedoms.

As compared with Blanc, Sen gives us a rather more sympathetic view of negative freedom, which he sees as an essential component of our fundamental liberties. And we can readily agree that a certain degree of negative freedom (absence of restraint and constraint) is necessary. Excessive or unsuitable restraints or constraints can clearly damage our power to do good. Yet, as we shall see, negative freedom *on its own* is far from sufficient, and can indeed be seriously harmful; while appropriate restraints can be helpful, indeed necessary.

In France, the COVID-19 epidemic provides a striking example of the contrast between negative and positive freedoms. The French government has decided that persons without a *pass sanitaire* (certificate of vaccination) shall not be admitted to cafés, restaurants, theatres, airports, and other public places. But some people complain, very noisily, that this is an unacceptable intrusion upon personal liberty (Guedj and Woo 2021). The liberty concerned here is clearly a negative liberty: absence of the constraint of having to be vaccinated and to present a certificate to prove it.

But this negative liberty would appear to be contrary to the common good, because unvaccinated persons are more likely to transmit or contract the disease. It conflicts with the community's need for protection against contamination. The obligation to be vaccinated, if one wishes to frequent places where people gather, could (to paraphrase Blanc) enhance "the power given to citizens to live and act under the empire of justice and under the protection of the law," thus augmenting citizens' positive freedom.

The cult of negative individual freedom, as the sole or super-dominant ingredient of liberty, is called libertarianism; it is, in my opinion, one of the maledictions of our times.

Amoral Freedom

Negative freedom alone, undirected towards doing good, easily becomes positively harmful. If one has negative freedom, but does not direct this freedom to good ends, then what one has is amoral freedom. A major problem today is that we have allowed ourselves to be much influenced by thinkers who have argued explicitly in favor of amoral freedom. We have already noted the views of Bentham, Rothbard, and von Hayek; another example comes from University of Chicago economist Milton Friedman (1962, 12): "freedom has nothing to say about what an individual does with his freedom." Isaiah Berlin (1969, 147–48), a famous proponent of negative freedom, observed that many eminent philosophers – he mentions Spinoza, Locke, and Kant among others – have held, in effect, that "freedom is not freedom to do what is irrational, or stupid, or wrong." But Berlin rejected this view; he preferred that of Bentham (2007, 150): "Is not liberty to do evil, liberty? If not, what is it?"

Bentham's concept of freedom flies in the face of Jewish and Christian traditions. In both the Hebrew Bible and New Testament, we find the translated word "redemption" used metaphorically to mean pardon and purification. The original meaning of this word (buying back or buying out) was buying a slave out of bondage; thus, sin is equated with slavery. So, if there is a "right to do wrong," it is analogous with the legal right, which may have existed in the Ancient Near East (see Leviticus 25:39), to sell oneself into slavery. It makes little sense to call such a right a freedom. Therefore, if we say that the "right to do wrong" is a freedom, we contradict ourselves. Edmund Burke (2001, 412), in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, demanded: "what is liberty without wisdom, and without virtue?"

Without “tuition and restraint,” he continued, liberty is “the greatest of all possible evils; for it is folly, vice and madness.”

The power to do wrong, as Häring explained, is not a freedom; it is a power to abuse our free will. In this world, we can never divest ourselves completely of that sad power or possibility. But we can diminish it; as the Catechism suggests (no. 1395) to Catholic Christians, “the more we share the life of Christ and progress in his friendship, the more difficult it is to break away from him by mortal sin.” In becoming less able to sin, we become more free. This might seem to be a paradox; but is it? If one is a normally decent person, one may well feel that one could not bring oneself to commit some horrific crime, such as raping or torturing another person. Does one feel “unfree” because of this inability? That would seem unlikely.

We read (Psalm 119:45) that “I will walk at liberty, for I seek thy commandments”; Jesus says (John 8:34) “everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin.” In the third century CE, Rabbi Joshua ben Levi stated (*Pirke Avot* 6.2) that “there is no free man for thee but he who occupies himself with the study of Torah,” i.e., learns God’s laws and strives to abide by them. In the eleventh century, Anselm of Canterbury (*De libertate arbitrii* 1) wrote that “the power to sin is not freedom, nor is it a part of freedom.” Thomas Aquinas (*Summa Theologiae*, II/II, q. 88, a. 4) stated that “inability to sin does not diminish our freedom.” According to Pope Leo XIII (1888, no. 6), “the possibility of sinning is not freedom, but slavery.” The *Westminster Confession* (1646, ch. 20) of the Presbyterians states that Christian liberty consists in “freedom from the guilt of sin.” The notion of amoral freedom is neither Jewish nor Christian.

Individual Liberty and Our “Modern Phobia about Commitment”

The phrase in quotation marks comes from the distinguished French Jewish sociologist Eva Illouz (2012), who comments that “extreme individual liberty has led to our losing sight of the strong values of love and commitment.” Her remark, needless to say, shows a clear affinity with Catholic teachings concerning marriage and family life. The current tendency to shun traditional matrimony, to prefer various forms of less permanent or less exclusive relationship, is another example of the cult of negative freedom (absence of restraint). Von Hayek (1960, 83) argued, in relation to families and to marriage, that “society can do little to protect the individual [from coercion] beyond making such associations with others truly voluntary.”

The problem highlighted by Illouz also reflects the low value put on stability by free-marketeers and technologists, whose attitudes have come to dominate our thoughts and habits. They want everything fluid, flexible, and continually changing – no long-term commitments. Disruptive technology, to quote their own slogan, is their dream. “There is no longer any stable economic system. All the world is condemned to the discomfort of permanent change” said Richard Lesser (2014), chairman of Boston Consulting Group, as though this syndrome of incessant accelerating change were imposed upon us by some extra-human force like an earthquake or tsunami. But the “permanent change” he describes is an outcome of our behavior; we are not “condemned” to it by forces beyond our control. On the misguided view that negative freedom alone is what really matters, we have chosen to discard most of the rules and practices that formerly moderated the pace of change. In

practice, since almost everything in this world undergoes change, stability means slow or gradual change. We could use more of it.

One must wonder how much pervasive instability and disruption individuals and societies can tolerate, without suffering grave damage. Moreover, constant change calls for frequent replacement of almost everything, leading to overconsumption of resources and overproduction of wastes. Some people feel that stable relationships prevent them from "finding themselves" or "being themselves." They might perhaps do better to heed the warning (1990, 239) given by Joseph Ratzinger, later Pope Benedict XVI: "Hell is wanting-only-to-be-oneself." It has been said that, in a good marriage, each partner feels toward the other that "I need you to be more myself."

Economic Freedoms and Their Implications

What is Lacordaire's "Oppressive Freedom"?

Henri-Dominique Lacordaire was a leading nineteenth-century Dominican who re-established his order in France after its expulsion under the Revolution. A fine orator who became a member of the Académie Française, he was deeply concerned by the social problems of mid-century France, which was living through the first phase of modern capitalism, the period of the original industrial revolution (Oliphant 1863, 169–87). Labor relations were dominated by the theory and practice of freedom of contract, the legal doctrine that any person should be free to set up any contract with any other person, provided that each party "freely" agrees to the terms of the bargain.

This means, for example, that an employer should be free to make any contract with an employee that he or she will accept. The problem there, of course, was and is that employers are generally in a stronger bargaining position than individual employees; so "freely agreed" contracts of employment tend to be biased in favor of the employers and less than fair to their workers. The terms and conditions of many employments were then, as they are too often today, deplorable. A remedy: to impose by law certain standards, such as minimum wage levels or maximum hours of work, or to prohibit, so far as possible, work on Sunday. That is what Lacordaire had in mind when he said that "freedom is oppressive and the law sets free." Negative freedom (absence of constraints) for employers too often means that they are free to oppress their workers. Employment law, or worker solidarity in trade unions, can mitigate such oppression.

In that case, employees lose a certain degree of negative freedom. They lose their ability to negotiate individually their terms of employment; instead, they are restricted by labor laws or by unions' collective agreements. But where individual employees are in a basically weak bargaining position, that "freedom" to contract individually may be worth little in practice; it may be no more than "freedom" to make a bad bargain. By contrast, under legal or union-based regulation, employees can gain a degree of positive freedom, as it is described above by Blanc and Sen. The American sociologist Lester Ward (1841–1913), a prominent denouncer of *laissez faire* economics, remarked that "individual freedom can only come through social regulation" (see Foner 1998, 130).

The libertarian movement that has been so dominant in recent decades wants us to have more negative freedom, even though that may well mean that we have less positive freedom.

It is far from clear that in following their advice we have made a good bargain, especially when we consider that too often we have chosen amoral forms of negative freedom.

Freedom of Contract and the Reign of the Markets

I have argued that the concept of amoral freedom is fundamentally faulty. This philosophical error has very real practical consequences. It implies that authorities should not even try to limit misbehavior, for in so doing they obstruct the individual's "freedom to do wrong." The anarchist Rothbard (2006, 127) propounded this view in striking terms:

The good, bad or indifferent consequences of pornography . . . are completely irrelevant to the question of whether or not it should be outlawed. The libertarian holds that it is not the business of the law . . . to enforce anyone's concept of morality.

Likewise, the amoral conception of freedom underpins the libertarian view that governments and courts should not intervene in the economy to restrain behavior that has reprehensible social consequences. They should leave it to unfettered markets to correct any economic misconduct, injustice, or collateral damage to society or environment. Yet there is little evidence that markets, left to their own devices, are capable of doing so.

Deregulation (negative freedom) granted to domestic and international markets in recent decades has brought us many grave problems.¹ It has permitted the extinction of many of our industries under free competition from low-cost developing countries. It has led to degradation in quality of employment. It has made it easy to transfer capital into places where it is lightly taxed, and where business is weakly regulated. All this has given rise to widespread and severe popular frustrations and discontents; and recent experience shows that disgruntled people tend to elect highly unsuitable leaders. We may well wonder why governments in democratic countries persist in following policies that induce vexation among much of the *demos*. The explanation seems to be that governments have come to believe that they have no choice; that these policies are imposed upon us by the markets. It appears that if we give markets too much freedom, we become their slaves.

The ability of markets to dominate governments, and thus to frustrate democracy, is a consequence of unrestricted freedom of international transactions. This implies free competition in international trade and free international movement of capital. These two freedoms, both of which involve freedom of contract, allow businesses to delocalize their operations, causing the disruptions we have all seen within our national economies. Businesses can blackmail governments into granting them negative freedom (relieving them of social and fiscal constraints) with the threat of moving elsewhere if governments fail to oblige.²

¹ For a more detailed discussion of these problems see Rodrik 2011, ch. 5.

² Freedom of international transactions can be acceptable within an area such as the European Union, where there is an overarching authority capable of imposing common regulations and standards, thus minimising unfair competition ("dumping").

Here we have an example of the principle that maximum personal freedom can lead to maximum communal unfreedom; by “personal freedom” I mean here freedom of legal persons (corporations) as well as freedom of individuals. Thus, the communities that governments represent are oppressed by the “international imperialism of money” deplored by Pope Paul VI (1967, 26).

Freedom of contract, in its pure form, is a negative freedom that is unconcerned with whether or not contracts are fair to the contracting parties, or conducive to the common good. The libertarian economist Edward Younkins (2000), whose writings show clearly the influence of Ayn Rand, asserted, in a discussion on American contract law, that:

Legislators and judges should refrain from substituting their own judgements in cases where they believe there is unequal bargaining power or where they think that contracts are not in the “public interest.” Contract sanctity is paramount.

However, Arthur Corbin (1952, 1166), one of America’s leading experts on contract law, stated that “We have never had, and never shall have, unlimited liberty of contract.” He showed more realism than certain economic theorists. The Catechism states (no. 2410) that “promises must be kept and contracts strictly observed *to the extent that the commitments made in them are morally just*” (emphasis added), thus ruling out the notion that we should be “free” to enter into “sacrosanct” contracts regardless of their morality.

Freedom of Association

Lovers of positive freedom insist on freedom to associate; libertarians yearn for freedom from association. In *Rerum Novarum*, Leo XIII (1891, nos. 48–61) vigorously defended the right of workers to associate in unions. Such associations had been out of favor since the French Revolution; according to Gide and Rist’s classic history of economic doctrines (2000, 257–58), “the men of 1789 . . . thought that association was very dangerous for the liberty of individuals.” The revolutionaries saw it “as a survival of the servitudes of the *ancien régime*.” There were also fears that associations might instigate public disorders. Accordingly, moves to restrict or suppress guilds and trade unions, thus denying freedom of association, were widely considered “progressive.” In England, the Combination Acts of 1799 and 1800, which outlawed guilds and unions, were supported by William Wilberforce, a reformist politician and philanthropist best known for his long-running anti-slavery campaign (Hind 1987, 321–35). In France, the *Loi Le Chapelier* of 1791, similar to the English Combination Acts, was promoted by Isaac Le Chapelier, a radical advocate renowned for his fiery speeches denouncing the privileges of the aristocracy and clergy (Stewart 1951). Even before the Revolution, Louis XVI’s finance minister, the economist Turgot, a friend of Adam Smith, had sharply denounced the traditional guilds and attempted to outlaw them.³

Nineteenth-century French *associationnistes*, who favored worker or customer cooperatives in preference to capitalist enterprises, “denied the principles of the Revolution”

³ See *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (1907-1912), article “Turgot.” The text of the edict of 1776, banning associations, is accessible at <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k57291/f308.item>. This edict, which aroused strong opposition, was a factor leading to Turgot’s dismissal a few months later.

by opposing the break-up of the traditional guilds with their anticompetitive agreements. The *associationnistes* “were particularly impressed by the then new phenomenon of *competition*,” which “seemed to them to be the great social danger; and with very remarkable perspicacity they predicted that competition would lead to monopolies of great capitalists” (Gide and Rist, 258). That is precisely what we see today in the world of Walmart and GAFAM. Too much competition leaves us with too few competitors because, in a jungle of unfettered competition, the strongest competitors can drive the smaller ones out of business. In Jewish terms, this could well be described as the offense of *hasagat gevul* (detriment to other people's livelihood).⁴

This is an example of the damage that can be caused by a kind of negative freedom, namely the absence of restraints imposed by associative agreements. So, freedom to compete needs to be tempered by freedom to associate. Before the “reforms” of the 1980s (Augar 2000), the City of London worked under a complex network of formal and informal agreements between bankers, between insurers, between stockbrokers, and so on, to the extreme annoyance of free-market economists. These agreements permitted the survival of many independent firms, which could compete on quality of service, but not on price. Following the abolition of such agreements in London and elsewhere, financial activities have come to be largely concentrated in the hands of a few overpowerful giants.

Property Rights and Freedom

In their obsession with countering the evils of communism, libertarians have adopted the view that liberty depends upon quasi-absolute property rights; that is, maximum freedom for property owners (individuals or corporations) to do whatever they choose with their own property. This implies minimum restrictions or charges on property ownership by the state or other authorities (see Walzer 1983, 291–303; Honoré 1961). But what one does, or does not do, with one's property generally affects other people. Catholic teaching on this point is well summarized in *Gaudium et Spes* (nos. 69, 71):

[M]an should regard the external things that he legitimately possesses not merely as his own, but also as common in the sense that they should be able to benefit not only himself but also others . . . it is the right of the public authority to prevent anyone from abusing his private property to the detriment of the common good.

Paris and other cities have many dwellings that are vacant or are occupied only occasionally or for short-term lettings; according to a survey by APUR (2017), 25.6% of the total housing stock in the four innermost arrondissements of Paris. These apartments are unavailable to people who wish or need to reside in the city. The dearth of permanent accommodation, aggravated by the recent sharp rise in short lettings arranged through internet platforms, has led to hefty increases in prices and rents, forcing many residents to move out of Paris, or even to sleep in the streets (VINGT 2017). However, French law (Code 2018) empowers the government to requisition certain empty properties in order to house *personnes en difficulté*,

⁴ See B. Bava Bathra 21b; B. Makkoth 24a.

thus recognizing the principle that private property rights may be subordinated to social needs.

The doctrine of absolute private property rights clashes with the very notion of society. But libertarians have always held society in contempt. Emerson (1841, para. 6) wrote that “society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members”; Ayn Rand (1961, 88) asserted that “there is no such entity as ‘society’ since society is only a number of individual men”; Adrian Wooldridge (1995, 18), journalist with *The Economist*, claimed that “there is no such thing as a free community.” The word “civilization” is based on the Latin *civis* (citizen, member of a society or community); so we may say without exaggeration that the libertarian concept of freedom is, quite literally, uncivilized.

Unbridled Freedom to Compete is Problematic

Nearly a century ago, Pope Pius XI (1931, no. 88) declared that “the right ordering of economic life cannot be left to a free competition of forces” and warned (1932, no. 18) of the dangers of “futile competitions of ever-increasing speed,” unwittingly anticipating our “high-speed trading” in financial markets. Unbridled competition, a form of negative freedom beloved of libertarian economists, brings us many problems (Sibley 2019, 65–79). By making consumer goods cheaper, it has encouraged wasteful consumption. By permitting low-cost imports on a huge scale, it has deindustrialized many countries, leading to chronically high unemployment, or employment in rotten conditions. Competitive pressures to prune costs can lead to maltreatment of workers. Competition in banking built the credit boom that exploded in the financial crisis of 2007/08. Unfair competition can destroy small businesses. Competition in technology induces ever-accelerating change, with troublesome social consequences. “Fiscal competition” between countries or regions (cutting taxes to attract business) may result in swollen budget deficits and deteriorating public services. Freedom to compete, like so many good and useful things, is desirable in moderation, but harmful in excess.

Freedom and Public Policy

Regulation and Freedom

It appears that there are many areas of life in which regulation is necessary: to limit, for example, injustices in employment and commerce, damage to the environment, contracts that conflict with the common good, or the social and economic harm caused by excessive competition. Regulations need not always be imposed by government; they can be enforced by bodies such as labor unions, trade or professional associations, or religious groups. They can also take the form of unwritten codes of conduct that are normally accepted within particular social or economic circles. But all such regulations offend against the principle of negative freedom because they all, in one way or another, impose restraints or constraints.

Regulation means that we agree collectively to discipline our individual behaviors. For libertarians, that is basically unacceptable because it curtails individual negative freedom. But if we define individual freedom positively as the power to do good, and not the power to do wrong, then it appears that well-chosen regulations need not damage our freedom and may even enhance it.

Public Services and Freedom

Many libertarians disapprove of public services financed by taxes or other obligatory contributions. In America, the “Obamacare” Act of 2010, extending compulsory, state-sponsored medical insurance, brought forth striking examples of this attitude. A senior fellow at the free-market Cato Institute, Michael Tanner (2010), claimed that obliging individuals to pay health insurance premiums amounted to an “unprecedented assault on individual liberty.” Tanner desired a form of negative freedom: absence of the constraint of having to pay contributions. We catch here an echo of the notorious dictum “taxation is theft” of the more extreme libertarians, such as Rothbard (1998, 162): “taxation is theft, purely and simply . . . it is a compulsory seizure of the property of the State’s inhabitants, or subjects.”

But there are sound, practical reasons for the community to intrude upon negative freedom by requiring contributions for health insurance. A universal healthcare system, able to provide affordable treatment for everyone, needs everyone to contribute, so that premiums covering the costs of treatment can be spread and averaged over the whole population (Sibley 2016, 404, 411–12). The costs of the sick are thus paid largely by the healthy. This is an example of what Catholics call solidarity, a notion routinely disparaged by free-marketeers; von Hayek (1988, 64) explicitly deplored “the persistence of instinctual feelings of altruism and solidarity.” But without this cross-subsidy or solidarity, those most in need of treatment may well be faced with unaffordable costs.

In countries that have universal national health insurance coverage, the obligation to provide for our healthcare by contributing to a universal health service enables us to stay in better health than might otherwise be possible. Staying in good health enhances our power to do good, which is positive freedom. Thus, as we have already remarked in connection with employment of labor, a reduction in negative freedom can lead to a gain in positive freedom.

Distributive Justice and Freedom

Catholic teaching strongly emphasizes the need for distributive justice, which means a tolerably fair distribution of economic resources, ensuring that everyone has access at least to a basic sufficiency thereof, and avoiding exorbitant inequalities (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, nos. 302–3). In today’s global economy, we have an international system that produces goods in enormous abundance, so cheaply that they are very often used carelessly and wastefully. In fact, we (humanity as a whole) are producing and consuming too much; we are using up our planet’s resources at unsustainable rates.⁵ Yet although we produce overabundantly, many people are still wretchedly poor, unable to consume enough even for a decent basic standard of living.

We are very good at producing, but very bad at distributing. The free-market economy has shown itself to be highly effective in generating economic growth, but incapable of

⁵ The WWF’s *Living Planet Report 2020* (2020, 6) states that “until 1970, humanity’s Ecological Footprint was smaller than the Earth’s rate of regeneration . . . we are [now] overusing the Earth’s biocapacity by at least 56%.”

promoting reasonable distributions of income and wealth. In America and Europe, inequalities have greatly expanded since the moves in recent decades to liberalize markets and to abandon the earlier practice of imposing high marginal tax rates on persons with very large incomes (Piketty 2014, ch. 13).

But is such redistribution compatible with freedom? Milton Friedman and his wife Rose (1980, 135) said no in very definite terms: “there is a fundamental conflict between the *ideal* of freedom and the *ideal* of ‘fair shares.’” Libertarians hold this view because they believe that we cannot pursue distributive justice without destroying our “freedom,” by which they mean negative individual freedom and absolute private property rights. They reject the Catholic view that the community has certain legitimate claims upon private property; that government, representing the community, has the right and the duty to rectify serious maldistribution or misuse of property. Benedict XVI (2005, no. 28) insists that “a just society must be the achievement of politics.”

The principle of obligatory redistribution is as old as Torah, which prescribed various tithes and other transfers from rich to poor. This idea is carried forward in the Catholic doctrine of the universal destination of goods (the right of every person to a sufficiency of goods; see *Compendium*, nos. 171–84). Since this is a human right, the community has a duty to provide it to its members, as a matter of justice, not simply of voluntary charity; as Benedict XVI (2009, no. 6) observes, “I cannot ‘give’ what is mine to the other without first giving him what pertains to him in justice.” Earlier, Pius XI (1931, no. 4) castigated those who “wanted the whole care of supporting the poor committed to charity alone.” Charity, in the sense of voluntarily helping those in need, is indeed blessed; but justice needs to be done first. How can it be right to argue that an obligation to do justice is an encroachment upon our freedom?

Justice and charity need to work in tandem. The words of Paul VI (1967, no. 22): “under the leadership of justice and in the company of charity, created goods should flow fairly to all,” suggest the tandem equipage with two horses harnessed in line. Justice takes the role of the horse in front (the leader), while charity takes that of the accompanying horse (the wheeler). For the carriage to run as it should, both horses are necessary.

It is regrettable that charity and justice have come to be seen often as alternatives rather than as complementary. The libertarian objects to obligatory redistribution for the promotion of justice, seeing that as an unacceptable intrusion upon one’s negative freedom to do as one pleases with one’s own property. Every transfer should be voluntary (Wolinski 2015). At the other extreme, Leo XIII’s (1901, no. 16) “socialist cries out and demands the abolition of almsgiving as injurious to the native dignity of man.” One dreams of a comprehensive welfare state that would eliminate the need for charity.

In the rabbinical tradition, the need for both has been made very explicit. Thus Rabbi Eleazar, one of the leading sages of the Talmud, stated (B. Sukkah 49b) that “*gemilut basadim* [“giving loving-kindness”] is greater than *tzedakah* [“righteousness” or “justice,” generally as

giving money to those in need]”; but *tzedakah* is an obligation in Judaism, while *gemiluth basadim* is voluntary, something one should do over and above what the Torah asks.⁶

Although Jesus expressly told the Pharisees (Matthew 23:23 and Luke 11:42) not to neglect the duty of paying tithes, some people argue that this obligation applies only to Jews, not to Christians. Yet Christianity adopted the payment of tithes. Irenaeus in the second century (*Contra Haereses* 4.13.3; Migne 1866, 1008), followed by Ambrose in the fourth (*Sermo* 35, *Sermo* 37; Migne 1855, 674, 677), his contemporary John Chrysostom (*Homily 4 on Ephesians* 2.10), Thomas Aquinas, and the Council of Trent (1848, ch. 12) all affirmed an obligation to pay tithes; or, said Thomas (*Summa Theologiae* II/II, q. 87, a. 1), perhaps “some other proportion.” The Council decreed excommunication for those who “withheld tithes or hindered their payment.” Traditionally, these tithes were used partly by religious houses to provide food and shelter and other services for the poor. Today, since such services are commonly provided by the state, there is less need for tithes; but many European countries have “church taxes” that members of the Catholic Church, and of other churches and religions, are required to pay (Pew 2019).

Freedom of Expression

One should be free to criticize, preferably in a courteous manner, the ideas, beliefs, and practices of other people. But defamatory speech or writing (slander or libel) is generally considered immoral, tortious, or even criminal. Moreover, it is hard to see why we should tolerate public incitement to hatred of any person or group of people. The horrors that have been caused by deliberately fomented racial or religious hatred should surely rule out any such tolerance. In most European countries, and in many others, “hate speech” is treated as a criminal offence.⁷ French and European jurisprudence, however, recognizes a tricky distinction between insulting a religion and insulting those who practice it (Colosimo 2018). In general the latter is criminal, but the former lawful. Many in France consider the “right to blaspheme” to be an important element of *liberté*. The French satirical journal *Charlie Hebdo* published in 2006 some insulting caricatures of Mohammed, and the Court of Appeal in Paris judged that these caricatures “do not overstep the permissible limit to freedom of expression” (Cour d’Appel 2008). But radical Muslims saw this and subsequent critiques of Islam by the journal as meriting murderous retribution, which they inflicted.⁸ The Vatican press office, commenting on the caricatures, stated that:

The right to freedom of thought and expression . . . cannot imply the right to offend the religious sensibility of believers. This principle applies obviously for any religion . . . these forms of exasperated criticism or derision of others manifest a lack of human sensitivity and may constitute in some cases an inadmissible provocation (Zenit 2008).

⁶ English translations of Jewish texts generally translate *tzedakah* as “charity”; this is confusing for non-Jewish readers, for whom charity normally means voluntary giving.

⁷ See <http://www.legal-project.org/issues/european-hate-speech-laws>.

⁸ On January 7, 2015, Islamic extremists invaded the offices of *Charlie Hebdo*, killing twelve people.

Can blasphemy really be an exercise of our power to do good? Some argue that mockery is not a real offence against God, who may well consider it beneath his notice. Thus, Rabbi Delphine Horvilleur (2020) writes: "What God would be vexed at being thus maltreated? Not the God of Moses, it seems to me - unless he has lost his sense of humor." Yet even if that is so, the fact remains that insult to God or religion can cause grave offence to the faithful. Thus, it may be seen as an offence not so much anti-divine as anti-social, as yet another example of libertarian contempt for society.

In the United States, hate speech is, with certain limited exceptions, generally held to be protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution,⁹ and thus permissible. It is widely believed that a free "marketplace of ideas," including nasty ideas, will lead naturally to emergence of the soundest ideas, just as free commercial markets are believed to yield the best outcomes for society. But in the world of practical economics, market failure is a common phenomenon. Unregulated markets can bring us outcomes such as penurious wages, exorbitant inequalities, extravagant consumption of resources, reliance on the dirtiest fuels because they happen to be the cheapest.

Likewise, the marketplace of ideas is vulnerable to market failure. Ideas frequently gain widespread acceptance not because they are sound, but simply because they are very vigorously promoted. The obnoxious theories of Nazism were "market leaders" for some years in Hitler's Germany. The repressive ideology of communism enjoyed a much longer period of dominance in many countries. The inhumane doctrines of the Austrian and Chicago schools of economic thought, promoted by forceful intellectuals such as von Hayek and Friedman and by their high-spending admirers in the business world, have had a deplorably strong hold over many of us since the 1970s.

Just as a free commercial market can degenerate into near-monopoly if certain market participants grow over-powerful, so the "market in ideas" malfunctions where certain proponents of ideas are too dominant. Therefore, we should not allow any person or organization that controls media to acquire an inordinately loud voice in the public arena. What are we to do when freedom of expression becomes "freedom" to spread deliberate lies? Now that electronic media allow ideas to be disseminated widely and instantly, we have reason to fear that willful "disinformation" is gravely threatening our democracies and societies.

The Catechism suggests (no. 1740) that "the exercise of freedom does not imply a right to say or do everything." Pope John XXIII (1963, no. 12), endorsing the human right to "freedom of speech and publication," observed that one "has the right, also, to be accurately informed about public events." This suggests that public authority may be morally entitled to suppress not only hateful publications, but also those that contain blatantly misleading information, on the ground that they conflict with the right to be accurately informed.

We are finding ourselves obliged to devise effective techniques of "moderation" for websites, email, and social media. Libertarians, of course, regard this as unacceptable

⁹ The First Amendment (1791) states that "Congress shall make no law . . . abridging freedom of speech, or of the press."

ensorship. We look down on the old-time censors who required dramatists and novelists to purge their texts of material that was deemed unfit for propagation. We enlightened moderns, it has been thought, have outgrown the need for such practices; just as we have thought that we need no longer worry about the risk of large-scale epidemics. It is noteworthy that the word “viral” is used in both contexts.

Whatever the practical and ethical difficulties, there is clearly a real need to limit the diffusion of gross lies and perverse notions that threaten the very fabric of our societies. Moderation, it seems, is one essential tool for this task; it can be justified on the ground that “the possibility of sinning is not freedom,” as Leo XIII observed; thus, the prohibition of malignant publication should not be seen as a deprivation of freedom. Another approach is to ensure that the main sources of information are well diversified; excessive concentration of ownership and control of media should not be tolerated. Moreover, institutions that offer independent high-quality reporting should be protected and encouraged.

National Freedom

Proponents of Brexit appear to think that Britain has obtained “freedom” by rejecting the supranational authority of the European Union (Hall 2020). But rejection of supranational authority implies that nations insist on being “laws unto themselves.” In effect this can mean international anarchy, unless fully sovereign nations are willing to cooperate closely with their neighbors. Britain, however, has seldom been enthusiastically cooperative with the nations of continental Europe.

If anarchy is unacceptable within a nation, why should it be thought acceptable within the world? History illustrates superabundantly the ghastly consequences that can result from anarchy among nations. We would be well advised to extend Aristotle’s dictum to international relations; thus, nations should not think it slavery to live according to the rule of an international constitution; for it is their salvation. After the appalling wars of the last century, and the continuing threat of totally catastrophic war, why are many people so unwilling to accept this principle?

It seems that too many of us have a false idea of national freedom. Nations, we think, should enjoy von Hayek’s negative freedom, the “absence of restraint and constraint.” Many still believe that, to cite nineteenth-century Irish nationalist Charles Stewart Parnell (1885), “no man has a right to fix the boundary of the march of a nation . . . to say to his country thus far shalt thou go and no further.” Within our countries, in a litigation between two or more parties, the court clearly has the right to tell each of them how far they may go. But we jibe at applying this principle to parties that are nation states. We think that nations are not free unless they have entire sovereignty; in other words, full negative freedom.

But John XXIII (1963, no. 80) observed that “the same law of nature that governs the life and conduct of individuals must also regulate the relations of political communities with one another.” Thus, nations have no more moral right than individuals to be laws unto themselves. We need an “international constitution” that nations are required to respect. The pope continues (1963, nos. 137–38):

Today the universal common good presents us with problems which are world-wide in their dimensions; problems, therefore, which cannot be solved

except by a public authority with power, organization and means co-extensive with these problems, and with a world-wide sphere of activity. Consequently the moral order itself demands the establishment of some such general form of public authority. But this general authority equipped with world-wide power and adequate means for achieving the universal common good cannot be imposed by force. It must be set up with the consent of all nations.

Likewise, Benedict XVI stated (2009, no. 67) that "there is urgent need of a true world political authority . . . such an authority would need to be universally recognized and to be vested with the effective power to ensure security for all, regard for justice, and respect for rights."

In the past, supranational (though not world-wide) authority and order has sometimes been achieved for a time by means of empire, with one powerful nation dominating many others. That method is no longer acceptable. We need to work toward agreement by as many nations as possible, and ultimately by all nations, to participate in a voluntary, cooperative "empire." This is clearly an extremely demanding prescription. Yet such agreement exists already in the European Union. There we see the fundamental importance of this project. Far more than merely a big free-trade area, the Union is a structure in which nations participate voluntarily in a supranational order (Schuman 1950). This is a new form of national freedom. It is a positive freedom that embraces cooperation, as opposed to the anarchic negative freedom that lets every nation go its own way. Just as individuals need to be good citizens of their nations, so nations need to be "good citizens" of the world. Sadly, many people in England and elsewhere, still obsessed by the twentieth-century notion of national self-determination, see any obligation to abide by an "international constitution" as an unacceptable servitude.

Nations have, and wish to conserve, their distinctive traditions, languages, and cultures; and so they should. But that does not mean that they should consider themselves "above the law." Thomas Fuller (1732), English physician and author of many aphorisms, gave us a famous saying: "Be you never so high, the Law is above you." That good principle should apply to nations, just as much as to individuals and to organizations within nations. In fact, the rule of international law should help nations to preserve their identity, rather than losing it in a free-for-all international anarchy in which the biggest countries and organizations impose their values, business practices and commercial brands throughout the world.

Conclusion

The pursuit of negative forms of freedom has been a worldwide trend throughout the twentieth century. We have indulged in a "bonfire of constraints," imagining that we have thus become more free. But this bonfire has scorched our real freedom. *Laissez faire* in economics has made us slaves of the markets and devalued economic justice. The cult of national sovereignty implies international anarchy. The unbridled internet has swamped us in disinformation. The "right to blaspheme" has triggered mortal religious strife. Untrammelled freedom of contract has permitted the spread of unfair contracts. Easy access to divorce has destabilized matrimony.

There is a remedy for these errors. We must abandon the notion of amoral freedom and learn that real freedom is inseparable from the pursuit of goodness and justice; that rules, precepts and customs that help to keep us in the ways of righteousness, far from being oppressive, help us to be more truly free. We would do well to keep in mind a memorable saying of Augustine: *felix necessitas est, quae in meliora compellit*, “it is a happy necessity that makes us do better things!” (quoted in Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I/II, q. 88, a.4).

Bibliography

- APUR (Atelier parisien d’urbanisme). 2017. “Recueil thématique 1^e, 2^e, 3^e, 4^e arrondissements de Paris” (July 2017).
- Aristotle. 1885. *Politics*. Translated by Benjamin Jowett. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Augar, Philip. 2000. *The Death of Gentlemanly Capitalism*. London: Penguin.
- Benedict XVI. 2006. *Deus Caritas Est*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.
- Benedict XVI. 2009. *Caritas in Veritate*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.
- Bentham, Jeremy. 1931. *The Theory of Legislation* (1802). Edited by C. K. Ogden. London: Kegan Paul.
- Bentham, Jeremy. 2007. In *Common Minds: Thoughts from the Philosophy of Philip Pettit*. Edited by G. Brennan et al. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Berlin, Isaiah. 1969. *Four Essays on Liberty*. Oxford: Oxford.
- Blanc, Louis. 1847. *Organisation du Travail*. Paris: Société de l’industrie fraternelle.
- Burke, Edmund. 2001. *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790). Edited by J. C. D. Clarke. Stanford: California.
- Catechism of the Catholic Church*. 1992. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.
- Chrysostom, John. “Homily 4 on Ephesians.” www.newadvent.org/fathers/2301.htm.
- Code 2018. *Code de la construction et de l’habitation*, article L642-1 (modified November 23, 2018). <http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr>.
- Colosimo, Anastasia. 2018. “Blasphemy in France and in Europe – A Right or an Offense?” <https://www.institutmontaigne.org/en/blog/blasphemy-france-and-europe-right-or-offense>.
- Cour d’Appel. 2008. “Arrêt de la Cour d’Appel de Paris, 12 March.”
- Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*. 2004. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.
- Corbin, Arthur. 1952. *Corbin on Contracts*. St. Paul: West.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo. 1846. *Self Reliance*. Essay.
- Foner, Eric. 1998. *The Story of American Freedom*. New York: Norton.

- Friedman, Milton. 1962. *Capitalism and Freedom*. Chicago: Chicago.
- Friedman, Milton, and Rose D. Friedman. 1982. *Free to Choose*. Orlando: Harcourt.
- Fuller, Thomas. 1732. *Gnomologia*, no. 943.
- Gaudium et Spes*. 1965. Pastoral Constitution of Vatican II. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.
- Gide, Charles and Charles Rist. 2000. *Histoire des doctrines économiques* (1909). 6th ed. Paris: Dalloz.
- Guedj, Lea and Kiming Woo. 2021. “Thousands protest against COVID-19 health pass in France” *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/thousands-protest-against-covid-19-health-pass-france-2021-07-31>.
- Hall, Macer. 2020. “Brexit Freedom begins today.” *Express*, January 31. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1235851>.
- Häring, Bernhard. 1961. *The Law of Christ (Das Gesetz Christi, 1958)*. Translated by E. G. Kayser. Cork: Mercier.
- Heschel, Abraham. 1966. *The Insecurity of Freedom*. New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux.
- Hind, Robert J. 1987. “William Wilberforce and the Perceptions of the British People.” *Historical Research* 60 (143): 321–35.
- Honoré, Anthony M. 1961. “Ownership.” <http://fs2.american.edu/dfagel/www/OwnershipSmaller.pdf>.
- Horvilleur, Delphine. 2020. “L’affaire Mila interrogée.” *Le Monde*, February 5.
- Illouz, Eva. 2012. “L’amour et le désir font-ils de bons partenaires?” *Le Monde*, December 6.
- John XIII. 1963. *Pacem in Terris*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.
- Lacordaire, Henri-Dominique. 1861. *Conférences de Notre-Dame de Paris*, tome II. Paris: Poussielgue-Rusand.
- Leo XIII. 1888. *Libertas Praestantissimum*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.
- Leo XIII. 1891. *Rerum Novarum*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.
- Leo XIII. 1901. *Graves de communi re*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.
- Lesser, Richard. 2014. “Interview with Philippe Escande.” *Le Monde*, October 9.
- Migne, Jacques-Paul, ed. 1855. Ambrose, *Sermo 35, Sermo 37*. In *Patrologia Latina*, v. 17.
- Migne, Jacques-Paul, ed. 1866. Irenaeus, *Contra Haereses*. In *Patrologia Graeca*, v. 7.
- Oliphant, Margaret. 1863. “Henri Lacordaire.” *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 93 (February).
- Parnell, Charles Stewart. 1885. Speech given at Cork, January 21.
- Paul VI. 1967. *Populorum Progressio*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

- Pew Research Center. 2019. “In Western European Countries With Church Taxes, Support for the Tradition Remains Strong.” <https://www.pewforum.org/2019/04/30/in-western-european-countries-with-church-taxes-support-for-the-tradition-remains-strong>.
- Piketty, Thomas. 2014. *Capital in the Twentyfirst Century (Le Capital au XXI siècle, 2013)*. Translated by Arthur Goldhammer. Cambridge, MA: Harvard.
- Pius XI. 1931. *Quadragesimo Anno*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.
- Pius XI. 1932. *Caritate Christi compulsi*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.
- Rand, Ayn. 1961. *The Virtue of Selfishness*. New York: Signet.
- Ratzinger, Joseph. 1990. *Introduction to Christianity (Einführung in das Christentum, 1968)*. Translated by J. R. Foster. San Francisco: Ignatius.
- Rodrik, Dani. 2011. *The Globalization Paradox*. Oxford: Oxford.
- Rothbard, Murray. 1998. *Ethics of Liberty* (1982). New York: NYU.
- Rothbard, Murray. 2006. *For a New Liberty* (1973). Auburn: Ludwig von Mises Institute.
- Schuman, Robert. 1950. “Schuman declaration May 1950.” https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/history-eu/1945-59/schuman-declaration-may-1950_en.
- Sen, Amartya. 1999. *L'économie est une science morale*. Paris: La Découverte.
- Sibley, Angus. 2016. “Healthcare’s Ills: A Catholic Diagnosis.” *The Linacre Quarterly* 83 (4): 402–22.
- Sibley, Angus. 2019. “The Catholic Case Against Unregulated Competition.” *International Studies in Catholic Education* 11 (1): 65–79.
- Talmud. “Halakhah.com by Tzvee Zahavy.” <http://www.halakhah.com>.
- Tanner, Michael. 2010. “2010 Health Care Legislation.” Downsizing the Federal Government. <http://www.downsizinggovernment.org/hhs/legislation>.
- Stewart, John Hall. 1951. *A Documentary Study of the French Revolution*. New York: McMillan.
- Trent, Council of. 1848. *Proceedings of the 25th Session (1563), Decree on Reformation*. Translated by J. Waterworth. London: Dolman.
- VINGT. 2017. “Airbnb Backlash in Paris.” <https://vingtparis.com/market-news/holiday-rentals-paris>.
- Von Hayek, Friedrich. 1960. *The Constitution of Liberty*. London: Routledge.
- Von Hayek, Friedrich. 1988. *The Fatal Conceit*. London: Routledge.
- Walzer, Michael. 1983. *Spheres of Justice*. New York: Basic.
- Wolinski, Matt. 2015. “Libertarianism and the Welfare State.” Preprint. http://www.academia.edu/23843573/Libertarianism_and_the_Welfare_State.

- Wooldridge, Adrian. 1995. *Meritocracy and the Classless Society*. London: Social Market Foundation.
- WWF. 2020. *Living Planet Report*. Washington: WWF.
- Younkins, Edward. 2000. “Freedom to Contract.” *Liberty Free Press*. <http://www.quebecoislibre.org/younkins25.html>.
- Zenit. 2008. “Statement on Offending Religious Sentiments.” <https://web.archive.org/web/20061002192333/http://www.zenit.org/english/visualizza.phtml?sid=83985>.¹⁰

¹⁰ Editor’s Note: This article no longer appears on the zenit.org website, but it is quoted and/or cited by several news agencies and published works. The now-missing page was archived by the Internet Archive Wayback Machine on October 2, 2006, and an excerpted version, which contains the author’s quotation, can be found at <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/5930/vatican-criticizes-publication-of-offensive-muslim-cartoons-as-well-as-violent-response>.