

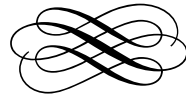
THE
ILLUSION
OF
FREEDOM
AND
EQUALITY

Richard Stivers

THE ILLUSION OF FREEDOM AND EQUALITY

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THE ILLUSION OF FREEDOM AND EQUALITY



RICHARD STIVERS

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To my wife Janet and our life together

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It is not truth that rules the world but illusions.

Kierkegaard

*The people will fancy an appearance of freedom;
illusion will be their native land.*

Saint-Just

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CHAPTER 1



Introduction

Freedom and equality are on everyone's lips, are endlessly proclaimed by politicians, and seem to be self-evident terms until we apply them to current events. For instance, President George W. Bush talks about terrorist evildoers as the enemies of freedom. His opponents point to him as an enemy of freedom because he has enlarged the power of government to place its citizens under more complete surveillance. Perhaps President Bush is close to some 1960s radicals who proclaimed "No freedom for the enemies of freedom." His extension of this view would seem to be: "No freedom for *anyone* until the enemies of freedom have been destroyed." But I am not going to discuss politics in this book. Consequently, few will take it seriously in an age in which every issue has been politicized. This book will be dismissed by those who live for politics or who enjoy it as a kind of entertainment. Everything is political. How can anyone deny it?

And yet everything is concurrently an economic issue. We think everyone acts out of self-interest, most often economic self-interest. Global capitalism has cowed the political Left; the Left has run out of alternatives to capitalism now that it is global. Some even maintain that global capitalism portends the end of the nation-state and of politics as we have known it for the past two centuries. So what is it—politics or economics? Is the former reducible to the latter under global capitalism, just as the reverse was the case under mercantilism? Again, this book will be immediately rejected by those who think that global capitalism is the most important factor in the organization of modern society.