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# The Voluntaryist

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Whole Number 46

*"If one takes care of the means, the end will take care of itself."*

October 1990

## **"Voluntary" Contributions to the National Treasury: Where Does One Draw the Line?**

By Carl Watner

Although people were arrested or imprisoned for non-payment of taxes prior to 1913, such episodes were relatively few and far between because there were no significant governmental levies against property or income. However, as a result of the passage of the income tax amendment, anyone working for his living, today, is supposed to "contribute" 20 to 25% or more of his income to pay federal, state, and local taxes. If one does not "voluntarily" pay his income taxes, he could be criminally indicted for willful failure to file and pay; his person and property could be subject to seizure and confiscation. Such actions can only be predicated on the premise that both one's body and income belong to the State. If convicted, one could face a lengthy jail term, as well as a hefty monetary fine.

Is the person who does not or will not file or pay his income taxes really a criminal? Probably not. Generally, his income has been honestly earned by providing a product or service for those who choose to trade with him. Only a federal or state prosecutor would dare to come forward with a criminal indictment (the State having been deprived of much-needed obeisance and funds). In short, he must accuse the would-be criminal of committing a victimless crime, because there is no individual whom he has physically harmed, or whose property he has trespassed against.

We have grown up in an atmosphere of State control over our lives, and to knowingly refuse to file and pay taxes is to court great danger. The psychological aspect of tax refusal is to wonder when the long arm of the law will descend upon the "refuser." Intimate business associates become shy in dealing with such a person because they perceive his actions may snare them in a vicious net, even if their activities are legitimate from the point of view of the law, so-called. The objector's family becomes wary of strangers, who might be nosy I.R.S. agents, and his wife wonders what might become of her children, herself, and her home in the event her husband is prosecuted. The State, through its direction of schooling, its use of media propaganda, and its impact on the culture around us, wages psychological warfare against those who refuse to kowtow to its image of control and authority.

Despite the relentless campaign to obtain voluntary compliance with the tax laws of the State, some people have chosen to become conscientious objectors against taxation, and in particular, against income taxation. This latter is where some "draw the line." It appears to them to be totally contrary to an ethic of life-survival to support one's enemy voluntarily. By conscientious objection, such people refer to the awareness that taxation is theft, and therefore a wrong committed against them. Like one who, when called upon in time of war to fight for his country, refuses to do so because of conscientious moral or religious scruples, these people are the ones who, when called upon to contribute their "fair" share of income taxes, refuse to do so out of knowledge of the evil of the State and the wrongness of taxation.

The conscientious objector rejects the State and the income tax for two reasons. First, he objects to their compulsory nature, and secondly, to the odious uses to which the State employs the money so collected. Government employees are the only group

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## **Cloaking The State's Dagger**

By Robert Nisbet

What we call political philosophy is so overlaid in the West with euphemism, panegyric, and idealization that anyone might be forgiven for occasionally failing to remember just what this philosophy's true subject is: the political state, unique among major institutions in its claim of absolute power over human lives. Euphemisms for the state drawn from kinship, religion, nature, reason, mechanics, biology, the people, and other essentially nonpolitical sources have been ascendant for so long in Western history that it is downright difficult to keep in mind that the state's origin and essential function is, as philosopher David Hume pointed out in the 18th century, in and of force—above all, military force. What procreation is to kinship and propitiation of gods is to religion, monopolization of power is to the state.

There is no political order known to us in history, from ancient Egypt to contemporary Israel, that has not originated in war, its claimed sovereignty but an extension and ramification of what the Romans called the *imperium*, absolute military command. War is the origin of the state and, in Randolph Bourne's familiar phrasing, is the health of the state. Modern war, grounded as it usually is in the kinds of political and moral ideals, or claimed ideals, which can justify almost limitless expansion of the state at the expense of society, is very healthful indeed to any form of state.

The essence of the state, then, is its unique possession of sovereignty—absolute and unconditional power over all individuals and their associations and possessions within a given area. And at the basis of the state's sovereignty is the contingent power to use the military to compel obedience to its rule. This is as true of democratic as of despotic states.

The most democratic of contemporary states claims a monopoly of power within its borders, exclusive possession of and control over the military and police, and the right to declare war and peace, to conscript life and appropriate income and property, to levy taxes, to supervise the family and even, when necessary, the church, to grant selective entitlements, to administer justice, and to define crime and set punishment. The political state is the only association whose freedom to act cannot be limited by the state. With all respect to differences among types of government, there is not, in strict theory, any difference between the powers available to the democratic and to the totalitarian state. We may pride ourselves in the democracies on bills or other expressions of individual rights against the state, but in fact they are rights against a given government and in history and practice have been obliterated or sharply diminished when deemed necessary, as in the United States and other Western-democratic powers in the two world wars.

It is not strange, then, that the history of the state should be accompanied by the rich embroidery of euphemism. Any institution born of war, that thrives in war, and that claims unique absoluteness of power over all individuals within its borders requires all the symbolic assistance it can get. Such assistance has for a very long time been the offering of the political clerisy. Like the church, the state must have its defenders, rationalizers, and justifiers, its scribes and prophets. Also like the church, the state must have its dogmas and rituals, its feast days, its saints and martyrs, and its sacred objects.

**Family**

The oldest of euphemisms for the state's distinctive military  
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# The Voluntaryist

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## Potpourri From The Editor's Desk

### 1. "How It Was"

"Until August 1914 a sensible, law-abiding Englishman could pass through life and hardly notice the existence of the State beyond the post office and the policeman. ... He could travel abroad or leave his country forever without a passport or any sort of official permission. He could exchange his money without restriction or limit. He could buy goods at home. For that matter a foreigner could spend his life in the country without permit and without informing the police. ...

All this was changed by the impact of the Great War. ... The state established a hold over its citizens which, though relaxed in peace time, was never to be removed, and which the Second World War was again to increase. The history of society and the State merged, for the first time."

—A.J.P. Taylor, ENGLISH HISTORY: 1914-45, 1965, p.1

### 2. "And Now—How It Is"

As the new decade begins Americans would do well to consider the realities of their "kinder, gentler nation" and the "land of the free".

Are you free:

When over 50% of your hard-earned money(?) is stolen by fraud, via taxes to support a government bureaucracy gone mad?

When you can't drive on "free"-ways or public streets without a driver's license and vehicle registration?

When you must send your children to a government licensed school or the State will confiscate your property or kidnap your kids if you rebel?

When the church or religion must be "licensed" by the State or go underground?

When you must ask the State for permission to marry?

When you CANNOT practice "free" enterprise without being licensed and taxed by the State?

When the State tells you when, where and how to build on your own property and even denies you the right to "modify" unless you ask them first?

When America has more "political" prisoners under lock and key than most nations and are busy building "concentration camps" to house even more?

When government knows every financial transaction you make and your private banking records are made available to their prying eyes WITHOUT your knowledge or consent?

(Adapted from C.B.A. BULLETIN, January, 1990)

### 3. "Imperialism" by Jo LaBadie (1850-1933)

I am an imperialist,

Being emperor of myself,

My ego is my empire, over which none other may wield the scepter of rulership.

I alone am emperor in the realm of my own consciousness.

Who denies me this prerogative is a usurper;

Who takes it from me is mine enemy;

Who invades my territory deserves no kindly

consideration, put his weal in jeopardy.

This empire keeps me busy with affairs its own.

So I have no time to dabble in matters foreign to its sphere.

No inclination to add burdens to those justly, fairly, squarely mine own.

My empire is different than any other.

In so far as is possible mine is a self-determining entity.

And no one shall invade it but at his peril.

I am enemy of all invaders, and invaders of none.

Being at peace with every one who mind(s) his own business and leaves mine to myself.

### 4. "More on Button Pushing"

In No. 17 (August 1985) of THE VOLUNTARYIST, I wrote an article entitled "Button Pushing or Abdication: Which?" At that time, I was familiar with the history of the abolition of rationing ordinances, wage-price controls, and the introduction of a new hard currency in Western Germany after World War II. However, it did not occur to me to discuss that example in my article.

Ludwig Erhard (1897-1977) was probably the first and only economist to believe in and then test the efficacy of the free market in a war-torn, discouraged country with a government-directed economy. On a Sunday, June 20, 1948, he told the German people that their only "ration coupon is [now] the mark," and ordered that every adult receive 40 new Deutsche marks printed in the United States. Erhard, who had been appointed to a five-member administrative board that governed West Germany, was criticized for acting without the prior consent of the Allied Command, which governed Germany. He is said to have replied to Commanding General Lucius Clay, who disapproved of his actions (but refused to rescind them): "I did not change the controls—this would have made advance consent necessary. I abolished the controls."

The success of Erhard's policy is referred to as the "German economic miracle." The country recovered economically beyond his wildest hopes. Goods flooded the markets, prices remained stable; eventually the Deutsche mark became convertible. Erhard did not, however, consider the German prosperity a miracle. In 1958, he wrote that "it is the result of the honest efforts of a whole people, who in keeping with the principles of liberty, were given the opportunity of using personal initiative and human energy." He concluded that "if the German example has any value beyond the frontiers of this country, it can only be that of proving to the world at large the blessings of both personal and economic freedom."

Applied to the Erhard example, the thrust of my "Button Pushing" article would have been that he should not have adopted a policy of abolishing price controls. Rather, he should have abdicated his official position, since the German people were not ready for such a policy, and because Erhard, himself, could not rightfully "force freedom upon them." Although the German economic miracle restored prosperity to Germany, it did not do away with all government controls over the economy, or make Germany a long-term bastion of the free market.

No one knows what would have happened if Erhard had resigned instead of abolishing the controls. We can safely say that although the immediate effect of the abolition of the controls was to make a more prosperous Germany, the long-term results prove that the Germans were not ready to have their freedom thrust upon them. Had Erhard and his co-administrators resigned instead of letting him push the button, and had no one replaced them, I do believe it is safe to conclude that individual Germans would have thrived and survived in a voluntary society.

Ultimately, we probably don't need to worry about people being ready for freedom. It could probably be termed a law of history that "whenever people are able to get government 'off' their backs, they inevitably practice capitalism, which is not an 'ism,' but an activity or pattern of human behavior." Capitalism comes about naturally without any "authority" doing anything to make it happen. As Julian Simon has argued, "human beings will naturally (on balance) create more than they destroy and consume, if they have adequate incentives to create" and are able to guarantee protection for the fruits of their labors. ☐

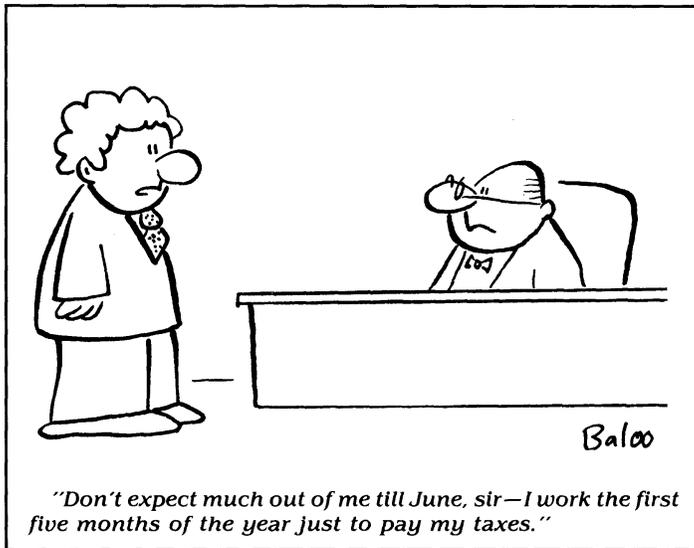
## "Voluntary" Contributions to the National Treasury

*Continued from page 1*

of people in society that regularly and "legally" use physical force, or its threat, to collect funds to sustain themselves. Whether the money is spent on ends of which the conscientious objector approves or whether the money is spent on ends of which he disapproves, the main point is that the money has been stolen, and therefore becomes tainted. It should be returned to its owners. Much as many people would like to think otherwise, the ends (whatever Congress decides to spend it on) do not justify the means (the coercive collection of funds).

Here are three ready measures of oppression in human societies. First, to what extent do government employees confiscate or collect property from individuals? This question has already been answered, by pointing out that most people "contribute" 20%, or often significantly more, of their income to various levels of government. Second, to what extent does one become a criminal by minding one's own business? In a society where the State has first claim to one's income, one becomes a criminal by refusing to contribute to the State's upkeep, and by refusing to supply the State with the information which it requires in order to calculate the share which you allegedly owe it. Those who in times past have refused to bear witness against themselves, and supply personal financial data, have been found in contempt of court and imprisoned for their obstinance. The measure of social injustice now existing in our society is reflected in the fact that the criminal penalties for income tax refusal are as great, if not greater, than the penalties for assault, rape, or murder. The third measure of oppression: to what extent does one have to ask permission to do as one pleases with one's own person and property? Witness the fact that, in the most "free" country in the world, one must have a government license or permit to engage in many occupations and professions, build a house with one's own money on one's own property, drive a vehicle on a road, travel abroad, or to operate almost any kind of business. These are all signs that we live under a domineering State that is intent on controlling and regimenting us in every conceivable way.

The "burden of proof" argument demonstrates how the government oppresses "its" citizenry. It wants you to prove that you don't owe any taxes, rather than having to positively prove that you do. It is their position that the burden is on you to either file and pay, or to prove why that is unnecessary. In either case, all the collection agents have to do is sit back and wait for their obedient slaves to fill their coffers. If this doesn't happen, then the State which fails to inculcate such obedience is faced with a fundamental challenge to its existence. Its agents must either initiate coercion to collect revenue, or the State must begin the process of 'withering away', which would ultimately bankrupt a



private group of people. When faced with this threat of shriveling up from loss of revenue or using coercion and its threat to sustain their income, the State has always historically flexed its muscles and jailed resisters—to demonstrate, first, that it means business, and second, to bully the majority into subservience by demonstrating what happens to those who chose to resist.

The State is a criminal and anti-social institution because its agents must initiate violence against peaceful people, and confiscate their property, and/or place them in jail for refusal to acknowledge its jurisdiction. The difference between private groups of people and the State is that no matter how influential or wealthy the former become, they never have the legal right to require you to deal with them. Those who see no gain from dealing in the market place, refrain from doing so, and are left alone. It is no crime to be a hermit. State power, however, is of a different character. As "citizens" we find ourselves living in a geographic area where defense services (police, army, and courts), and some social services (for example, first-class mail delivery, monetary legal tender laws) are coercively monopolized by the government. Whether or not we wish to be bound by its laws or patronize its monopoly services, we are forced to do so. There is no "right to ignore the State," as Herbert Spencer so eloquently argued.

The case for conscientious objection to the State rests on the basic moral premise that it is wrong for anyone to engage in aggression against non-aggressors. People, so long as they harm no one else, should be left alone. The State, and its agents, must always violate this precept, or else cease being a State. Since there are only two ways of inter-relating with other people in society—either voluntarily or coercively—State agents and people who support the State are faced with a dilemma. Do they act as accessories to the crimes of coercion, extortion, and theft, or do they distance themselves from the State; the former—by resigning their official positions, and the latter by refusing to pay taxes? Conscientious objectors to taxation, like Henry David Thoreau, have already answered this question. They will not be compelled, even under the direct threat or use of force, to bear witness against themselves, or to acquiesce in payment of their taxes, so-called. They do not wish to be accused of complicity in government crimes, whether against themselves or others.

The first three centuries of the Christian church's existence, when Christians were opposed to war and other forms of violence, illustrate the origins of conscientious objection to State power. The Christian opposition to war expanded into denial of the rightness of all coercive action on the part of the civil power, and thus arose that form of conscientious objection which is being discussed here. It may be identified as voluntaryist in nature, characterized by political non-participation, objection to the State, and taxation. Its manifestations are the refusal to serve or deal with the government in any way: the refusal to vote, to hold political office, volunteer information, pay taxes, etc.

Another historical form of conscientious objection was exhibited during the era of State-imposed religions. Those whose beliefs differed from the State's orthodoxy had to go underground, flee the country, or convert (at least cosmetically) in order to survive. The history of the Society of Friends (the Quakers) from its origins in 17th Century England is an example of a people persecuted for conscience's sake, yet who ultimately prevailed. From 1647, when George Fox began his public ministry, until the passage of the Toleration Act of 1689, the Quakers were subject to almost continuous persecution. It was not until the early 1800s, that they were no longer imprisoned for nonpayment of taxes to the Anglican church and that their complete religious freedom was recognized.

The spirit of truth which inspires the conscientious objector demands a unity of means and ends. Conscientious objection to taxation is derived from voluntaryism, which itself is means-oriented because of its concern for non-coercion. What the voluntaryist objects to about the State is the means it uses (its ultimate resort to violence and coercion). Although certain government goods and services may be essential, it is by no means necessary that they be provided by the State. The objection is against the means, against the methods of State power, regardless of what ends State power is used for.

Like the abolitionists of Thoreau's time, the conscientious objector realizes that even the most arduous journey begins with a single step. In their struggle to help the slave (often a violation of the federal Fugitive Slave Laws), statist laws and constitutions were nothing to the abolitionists. The old Puritan idea of duty was their ideal: quick in thought, prompt in action, stern love for the right, and the most unflinching advocacy of what one believes to be so, even though the whole world shall oppose. As Wendell Phillips once said, there is nothing higher than the individual's conscience. "We must each learn to feel, in determining a moral question, as if there was no one else in the Universe but God and ourselves."

Once satisfied that both taxation and support of the State are moral wrongs, the conscientious objector can only appeal to the consciences of other members of society—for it is their opinion which ultimately supports government and enforces all law. Unless the laws accord with the moral feelings and usages of the people at large, they will be inoperative and powerless. Freedom grows out of custom and tradition—not out of legislation or State edicts.

The conscientious objector sees a personal duty not to cooperate with evil. This entails performing one's duty regardless of the consequences; otherwise one becomes party to what one realizes is wrong. This means, that like the Russian dissidents of the 1970s and 1980s, conscientious objectors must act whether or not they think their actions will be practical and influential in molding public opinion. Certainly, Vladimir Bukovsky, one of those Russian dissidents, had no way of realizing the cumulative impact of the dissident movement, but he must have implicitly realized that if one takes care of the means, the end will take care of itself—for he wrote in *TO BUILD A CASTLE* (1977) that, we must grasp the great truth

that it was not rifles, not tanks, not atom bombs, that created power, nor upon them that power rested. Power depended upon public obedience, upon a willingness to submit. Therefore each individual who refused to submit to force reduced that force by one 250 millionth of its sum.

And, as he added,

We weren't playing politics, we didn't compose programs for the liberation of the people, we didn't found unions. ...Our sole weapon was publicity, ...so that no one could say afterward, "I didn't know." The rest depended on each individual's conscience. Neither did we expect victory—there wasn't the slightest hope of achieving it. But each of us craved the right to say to our descendants: "I did all that I could. ...I never went against my conscience."

[Editor's Note: Reader's might consult two earlier articles in *THE VOLUNTARYIST*, for variations on the same theme: "The Case Against T-Bills and Other Thoughts on Theft," (No. 28, October 1987) and "I Don't Want NOTHING from HIM!" (No. 31, April 1988). Also *A VOLUNTARY POLITICAL GOVERNMENT*, edited by Carl Watner, and available for \$6.95 from The Voluntarists, deals with Charles Lane's and Henry David Thoreau's early tax resistance in the 1840s.]

## Cloaking the State's Dagger

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power is drawn from the realm of kinship, which is natural, given the age and universality of family, clan, and kindred in mankind's history. Thus early kings or chiefs might claim themselves patriarchs. Recurrently in history, kings have been rulers of peoples rather than territories; they were this in the early Middle Ages. *King* is a derivative of Old English *cyng*, meaning kinship.

The patriarchal image of the state was nourished by a good deal of theology during the Middle Ages: and feudalism itself, as we find it at its height, was an ingenious fusion of military substance and kinship symbol. Patriarchalism survived the decline of medieval society, its enduring appeal well illustrated in the modern world by the popularity everywhere of such words and phrases as *fatherland*, *mother country*, *sister-nations*, and the like. Mario Cuomo, the keynote speaker at the 1984 Democratic convention, used the word *family* to describe the American nation just under two dozen times. It was with a keen

sense of the antiquity of kinship metaphors in politics that George Orwell chose to give his horrifying totalitarian government the label of Big Brother. But in many ways the most telling example of the power of a euphemism in thought is the argument in political and social philosophy—extending from Aristotle to modern political ethnology—that the state is but the natural development through time of kinship. It assuredly is not, but the myth appears to be ineradicable by now.

### Religion

Religion is second only to family in its fecundity of euphemism for the war-born state. Prepolitical man was as saturated by religious as by kinship influences upon his thinking. Almost as hoary as the patriarch is the prophet in mankind's annals. How better to give root to a military conqueror's acceptance by the conquered than to sanctify, even deify, him; to make him at worst an indispensable voice of the gods, at best one of the gods himself. Egyptian kings were addressed in rescript and inscription as Aton, Horus, Re, and so on in the order to give expression to their claimed identities as sun-gods.

The speed with which passage from the human to the divine could occur, and much later than the age of Egyptian pharaohs, is well illustrated by the careers of Alexander in the Hellenistic world and of Octavian, conqueror of Mark Antony at Actium, in the Roman. The latter was obliged by still-respected republican tradition to be more subtle than had been Alexander, but even so not a great deal of time passed before Octavian became officially *Imperator Caesar divi filius Augustus*, a title that artfully fused military, divine, and kinship.

*The history of political thought is a history of one euphemism after another to disguise the naked power of the state.*

—Robert Nisbet

Christianity was born in a setting of emperor-worship, and from the beginning its teachers and missionaries sought to nullify as far as possible the influence of the imperial religion upon Christian minds. But taking the long history of Christianity into account, it is impossible to overlook the readiness with which Christian faith and dogma could include acceptance of the sacredness of royal office if not personage. The crowning of Charlemagne by the Pope as *holy* Roman emperor suggests first the claim of suzerainty by church over state, including power of investiture of king, but second the allowance by church of sacred character into the kingship. Even the most powerful and assertive of popes in the Middle Ages did not deny to kingships their holy, if derivative, status.

It was, however, in the Reformation that the unqualified divinity of kings was once again proclaimed in the West. As Luther, Calvin, and others saw the matter, elevation of kings to divine status in their rule—directly divine status, unmediated by church—was as powerful a blow as could be struck at the hated and feared papacy. We tend to associate James I of England most prominently with the Divine Right of Kings because of his early-manifest fascination with the theology of the subject. It was under Charles I, though, in 1640, that what must be the all-time high in English belief in royal divinity was expressed. The statement begins: "The most high and sacred order of kings is of Divine Right, being the ordinance of God Himself, founded in the Prime laws of nature, and clearly established by express texts both of the Old and New Testaments."

Despite the numerous rationalist criticisms to which the divine-right panegyric was subjected in the next two centuries, it survived healthily. It was the influential German philosopher Hegel who, during the 19th century, declared the state—with the Prussian state foremost in mind—"the march of God on earth." And even when the German political idealists chose to retreat God to the background, obvious surrogates for God abounded: Dialectic, World-Spirit, and so on. ...

### The People

Very probably the most fateful concept of the late 18th century

in politics was "the people." Not the numerical aggregate of all who lived within a given set of boundaries, for this could include rabble on the one hand and tyrants and exploiters on the other. Rather, those individuals who could free their minds of sectarian prejudices and loyalties, who could in a rational way make their individual ways to comprehension of the general good and who acted virtuously in political matters—these were "the people," properly understood. If government were based in them, it would be inherently incapable of tyranny, for the people would never tyrannize itself.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau's momentous idea of the general will epitomized perfectly this vision of the people in contrast to a mere multitude. The vision has made its way uninterrupted through 19th-century ideas of plebiscitary dictatorship to 20th century totalitarianisms. None of the latter would use *totalitarian* as a label. For that matter even *communism* tends to be eschewed in favor of, say, *people's democratic republic*. ...

### Social Welfare

During the 20th century, yet another euphemism for political power has made its way into popular usage: the social welfare state. It is one of history's ironies that the word *social* should have been so easily appropriated by the political clerisy. When this word achieved popularity in the West in the early 19th century, the context was overwhelmingly the *nonpolitical* spheres of society—family, neighborhood, local community, and voluntary cooperative association foremost. To French sociologists and radical anarchists alike, the state and the political were in bad odor after the totalitarianism of the Revolution. Auguste Comte, founder of sociology, led the way in seeking to repudiate the political and to exalt the social as the only feasible alternative to the political. Alas for Comte's hopes, the political clerisy was already at work seizing upon the "social" before he died.

It is not difficult to understand the attractiveness of the "social" in place of the "political", for the latter had inevitably become somewhat stained in the public imagination. There were too many citizens for whom the state was still a reminder of war and taxes, and, in any event, there were simply limits to what could be done with the word *political*. Such neologisms as *politicization* and, worse, *politicalization* didn't recommend themselves when reference was being made to the political state's ownership and control of increasingly large areas of economy and society. Such words may have told the truth, but it is the function of language to be able to conceal, as well as reveal, the truth.

*Social* was made to order as a beguiling prefix. "Social reform," "social security," and "social budget" were so much better as labels for what governments were actually doing than would have been any of these with the word *political* used instead of *social*. Similarly, for those who could dream of an ever more state-dominated future, *socialism* was much to be preferred to *politicism*. And who is to say the clerisy is wrong? How, for instance, could the now-mammoth and always near-bankrupting "social security" system in the United States have ever reached its eminence and load of close to 40 million people if it had been called in the beginning "political security" or something so mercilessly exact as "state charity." ...

### Afterword

It is almost too much to bear. More than 2,000 years of political euphemism and panegyric, and with what result? The state, born of war and nourished by war, has become, all euphemism notwithstanding, more powerful, more inquisitorial in human lives, than at any time in its history. It is almost as if Mars, god of war, were exacting tribute from us for having sought for thousands of years to conceal with euphemism the union of war and state. For, in our century the state has reached a pinnacle of force never before known in history, and warfare has taken more lives in devastation, killing, and mutilation than in all previous centuries put together. ▣

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## Voluntary Musings A Column of Iconoclasm

By Charles Curley

"Nothing can defeat an idea  
--except a better one."  
--Eric Frank Russell

**TIJ:** "[Privy Secretary Thomas] Cromwell was executed for high treason on July twenty-eighth, 1540. . . . It was his own laws, in the end, that killed Cromwell. It was he who had introduced the novelties of holding prisoners without legal counsel; arrest without an opportunity to speak; attainder without legal condemnation; execution without benefit of trial. The harshness that he had visited on others now ensnared him."

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF HENRY VIII  
by Margaret George

That should give the authors of the RICO Act or the Internal Revenue Code something to look forward to!

### Glasnotes:

"Marxism-Leninism — On the trash heap of history."  
Picket sign, Moscow 1990 May Day parade

"It is too early to say just in what way the Russian regime will destroy itself. . . . But at any rate the Russian regime will either democratize itself, or it will perish. The huge, invincible, everlasting slave empire . . . will not be established, or if established, will not endure."

George Orwell, 1946

"Communists — Don't have any illusions, you're bankrupt."  
Picket sign, Moscow 1990 May Day parade

. . . except, perhaps, in the hearts and minds of the Peoples' Kakistocracy of California, where State Senator Art Torres wants to establish a state-owned airline. He says it's to lower air fares, but given the success rate of government owned industry, the net effect will no doubt be to raise air fares, and to let Mr. Torres fly to Sacramento at taxpayers' even greater expense.

"Let the Communist Party live in Chernobyl."  
Picket sign, Moscow 1990 May Day parade

"Socialism, no thanks."  
Picket sign, Moscow 1990 May Day parade

**The Post Awful** wants another rate increase, does it? I guess they're just plain tired of being yet another two bit monopoly.

**Q:** How come Congress has so many lawyers in it?

**A:** Where else can you get a secure lifetime job, at high salary, of lying, cheating, stealing and extorting?

**Private roads:** Free market theorists have long rallied around the cry of 'sell the highways!', on the theory that privately built and maintained highways would be more efficient and cheaper to run than the current government taxways. But what can you say about a firm that builds a complete highway network every year and then uses it for only ten weeks?

Robinsons' Trucking, Ltd, of Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, supplies several mines and other establishments in the Territories. Come winter, the company tests the ice thoroughly, and then plows a road across the lakes. For ten weeks the ice on the lakes of the area is thick enough to support 60 ton trucks running in convoys of three or four. To support the effort, the company runs its own rigs, graders, plows and aircraft. Occasionally a truck or dozer breaks through, and the company runs its own salvage operations. They have not yet lost one of their drivers, who are paid \$4,500 a month for those ten weeks.

No government boondoggle, this. The mines find it cheaper to resupply this way than to fly in supplies by helicopter or airplane. And, of course, the territorial government hasn't built year-round roads out to the mines.

Of course no government would build roads over the ice. First, they haven't the imagination. And can you imagine the conster-

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nation in Ottawa when they find out that the Brian Mulroney National Highway is scheduled to melt down within six months of being built. *Sic transit gloria mundi!*

**"Thou art mortal":** The Romans had a custom that when a conquering general returned to the city, they held a great parade for him, called a triumph. He was preceded by captives in chains, samples of the loot, and other mementos of his conquest. The general himself rode standing in a chariot, accompanied by a slave. The slave's job was to whisper into the general's ear, "Thou art mortal. Thou art mortal." For the entire parade, which could run to hours: "Thou art mortal. Thou art mortal."

I'm not wild about reviving the triumphs themselves, but the reminder to the politicians seems worth a go. How about requiring that, at presidential inaugurations and congressional swearing in ceremonies, the president and congressmen should be required to have hearing aid sized radios, which would repeat, "Thou art mortal" for the length of the ceremony. "Thou art mortal." Maybe for their entire terms. "Thou art mortal."

**You already know this:** "Every government is run by liars and nothing they say should be believed."

I.F. Stone

**Privatizing Wildlife:** With even establishment types like George Bush and Margaret Thatcher turning green (environmentalist, not motion sick), it behooves us to bring up examples of private wildlife efforts. Duck Unlimited and Nature Conservancy are two well known organizations, but how about Caterpillar, Inc? They've just had their 700 acre proving grounds designated as part of the Illinois Acres for Wildlife program, to help protect the local deer from poachers.

Mr. Max Runkle, the district wildlife biologist, was skeptical at first. But when he toured the facility, he was convinced. Part of that convincing was done by the six deer who showed up at roadside during the tour.

Deer? Wildlife program? on a bulldozer proving grounds? Yep. According to Tom Potts, the Cat technician who suggested registering the acreage, "They get used to heavy equipment. As long as you don't bother them, they stand out and watch you."

**Incompetent?** I wouldn't want to call the US 82nd Airborne "incompetent." Certainly not to their faces, anyway. But did you notice that while 22,000 US troops couldn't capture General Noriega, and let him slip to the Vatican nunciatura, the Romanian people were able to round up Mr. and Mrs. Ceaucescu? The Romanians were able to do this in spite of (or, perhaps, because of) a lack of US military training. But face it, the Romanian people had more incentive. Lots more.

**"There is** one difference between a tax collector and a taxidermist — the taxidermist leaves the hide."

Mortimer Caplin

**Go to** the head of the (working) class:

"We constantly hear about the gilded bathrooms in which we'll be bathing some day in the future, but we don't want them, we need ordinary bathrooms now."

Alexander Vinyukov,  
Soviet coal miner

**Sauce for the Goose Dept:** The House of Representatives has declared itself exempt from the minimum wage law and other labor laws. The record keeping would tie the House up in knots, according to Rep. Frank Annunzio (D., IL). Hey, it could be an improvement if the House were tied up in knots. Especially considering the way Congress ties us poor taxpayers up in knots.

**Promises, promises:** One result of glasnost in East Germany is that, apparently, the ferocious-looking guard dogs of the VoPo border guards were in fact pussycats: They are even frightened by the barking of other dogs! Typical socialism: all bark and no bite.

**He should know:** "The world's leaders are too often occupied in marking time so vigorously that they give the illusion of moving forward."

Abba Eban

**Independence for Georgia?** Now that the Soviet Union has acknowledged that maybe some of the people currently governed by the Soviets might like to go their own way, they are at least talking about the idea. The Soviets are, of course, hemming and hawing, and loading the proposals with all sorts of bureaucratic folderol.

Wonder why George Bush hasn't said anything about the idea? He's from Texas, remember. They've had one go at secession already, and might just like another. If it's good for Lithuania, it ought to be good for, say, Alabama!

**He should know:** "In order to become the master, the politician poses as the servant."

Charles De Gaulle

**I'll drink to that:** One of the parties contesting the March election in east Germany is the Beer Drinkers' Party. No doubt they're an offshoot of the beaker People Libation Front. What's their motto: "Don't trust a beer you can see through!"? How about "Toward a multi-party system: one on Friday night, one on Saturday night, one on Sunday night!"

**"Democracy:** The substitution of election by the incompetent many for appointment by the corrupt few."

George Bernard Shaw

**Elegance:** There is a certain elegance to the proposal of Prague public prosecutor Tomas Sokol. He wants to outlaw the Communist Party, the former rulers of Czechoslovakia. The elegance is that he wants to use laws passed by those self-same Communists against them, to wit: the so-called "anti-fascism laws". Not only is there no discernable difference between communism and fascism (under both of which eastern Europe has had to live), but these are the laws under which a lot of anti-communist activists were prosecuted (persecuted?) by the communists.

The proposal has all the elegance Admiral Poindexter's defense would have had had his attorneys RICOed Congress.

## Pearls of Wisdom

*Continued from page 8*

any other foreign power.

If I must submit to any foreign power to rule me, (119) I am a slave to some one's will, unless such other be in harmony with mine, and then it cannot be said to be a foreign power; for we are joined by the ties of nature, which is love, which make us as one. If one may not live his or her own true life, whose life shall they live? ...Must I submit to an ... armed brigand and change of laws, because they (the bandits) have been the most successful in destroying human life and trampling on human liberty? It is just as proper that I should do so as that I should now acknowledge the right to rule me in others that now surround me. Submit I may, of necessity, be obliged to do; but I die a freeman in spirit, though my body molder in the prison. I have taken no active part in government, state, or national for many years, having conscientiously withdrawn myself from all connections, ...[so] why should I be claimed as one of the murderous compact, and have their mandates imposed on me? ...[120]

It cannot truly be said that government does a good, on the whole, even to those who directly draw their support from her coffers. Many of our best men are spoiled in office seeking and finding. It unfits them for the more useful employments of life, and makes them miserable dependents on the public, to whom they must fawn, in slave-like servility, for a continuance of favors. Intrigue and fraud are cultivated to the total annihilation of all that is noble in man. The most gifted are too often sacrificed on this altar of human depravity. Our public offices are now more sought after as a means to obtain bread and butter without honest industry, than for any good.

These are evils too apparent to be denied, which one party charges to the other party, and the other party to them; but the evils are not in one party or the other party in particular, but in both, and the institutions which have a being in falsehood alone. [125] ☒

# We're Just Parents!!!

By Dennis M. Helming

Gardening is perhaps the most apt analogy to parenting. Parents do not make, but only plant, the seed of human nature. Yet necessary growing conditions do not end there; human nature, like plants, requires frequent weeding, when not occasional pruning. In all these steps the gardener must accommodate all his cares to the plant's nature and requirements, neither giving it too much nor too little. Though less precise, quantifiable, and predictable, parents must aim at the same golden mean in dispensing cares for their child.

Parents are obliged both to respect their child's personality and nurture it so as to promote his greatest possible development, but their duties toward their children are neither infinite nor surefire. While conscientious parents will do what they can, they can neither guarantee nor weigh themselves with the complete responsibility for the outcome. Not only are there influences from outside the family circle, but above all, the child is endowed with his or her own freedom, a not inconsiderable variable. Parents are, after all, stewards with a considerable but limited liability.

To understand this reality is half the art and battle of parenthood. This truth helps to counter-balance the excessive expectations and dreams that envelop your child when he/she is young, while it cushions the blows and disappointments later on when there is a departure from the blueprint. And if the emotions—positive and negative; impetuous and irrational, in any case—attendant upon the ups and downs of parenting are to be corrected and compensated for, parents must recur to this objective perspective time and again. It will give them the detachment they need to maximize their involvement. It also makes for happier, healthier children, which is the most parents can hope for anyway.

None of us can psychologically function very well or for long without a modicum of stability in our basic relationships. Kids need to know—to sense in their attitude—that their parents are with them and for them for the long haul. Kids need to experience that their highs and lows are met by constancy, that their misbehavior does not modify their parents' fundamental disposition toward them; that, in a word, their parents' relationship toward them is unconditional, irrevocable. More than anything else, that bedrock, one-sided commitment is what constitutes a home for them.

That stable commitment of parents—we gladly repeat, to avoid even the remotest possibility of misunderstanding—is compatible with punishment and correction. When the latter are due and delivered in due measure, they do not negate but manifest the commitment. With their keen sense of justice, kids bear no grudges. What is guaranteed to ruin children is hostility without cause, infatuation without correction, and to a slightly, lesser extent, reactive rewards and punishments that look not to the child's welfare but to the parent's absence of hassle or their fulfillment (as if the kids were some sort of lifestyle experiment).

Interestingly enough, children, no matter what their age, never seem to outgrow the need for a home, a corner of understanding and stability where they can take their wounds, a refuge of peace and sanity when all else fails them. Who among us is so self-sufficient and invulnerable that he can dispense, even in adult life, with those who loyally root for him, no matter what, because their stewardship knows no end?

Parenthood, we have been saying, is a voluntary commitment to give children what they need; parents owe it to their kids because the latter cannot obtain it on their own or from elsewhere. Earlier we pointed out that parental justice principally consists in respecting and understanding them in their individuality and in their human nature and the needs that ensue from both. This is no exercise in fantasy, no figment of the imagination. Those needs are real, objective; good parents will try to discover them and meet them, making their attitudes and the actions conform to the truth of the human condition. When all is said and done, what children need from their parents is to be shown and told the truth: what they are, what they could be, and how to get there. Whether the children buy it—whole or part,

sooner or later—is ultimately tied up with the unforeseeable way they administer their own free will. But one thing is sure: without exposure to these truths, they cannot help but make a mess of their lives. But when they are familiar with this three-part truth, the chances are greatly enhanced that children will voluntarily accept them and thereby liberate themselves from so many destructive untruths. Much depends, again, on how parents go about acquitting themselves of this debt.

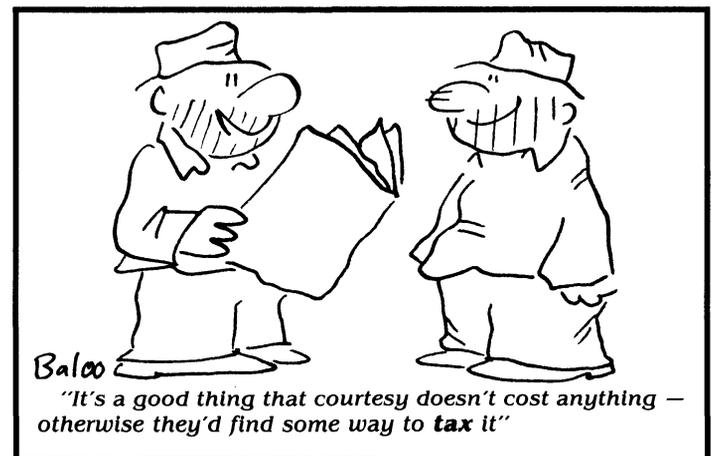
They must come to see that there is no simple, infallible answer or approach. Children are more than a lump of modeling clay. Their free will must be won—neither bullied nor idolized—if they are to internalize the truths that will guide their authentic character growth. Much of this parental education is aimed at showing children that actions have consequences: good or bad; for themselves, for others. Initially, perhaps, parents must rely on a judicious dispensation of rewards and punishments to condition their children's reflexes. But with the advent of increasing discretion, parents must learn to direct appeals to the mind and will.

The goal is to see their children ultimately become as free as they are responsible. But children are not free if they are not allowed to make mistakes—just as they will never be responsible if they are not helped to see the negative results of their misdeeds. By respecting their freedom while communicating to them criteria by which they may evaluate the uses of their freedom, parents create an atmosphere within which their children can learn from their behavior and modify it in the light of its consequences. Parents should focus their efforts on eliciting this freedom with responsibility rather than allowing themselves to get hung up on behavior: good, bad, or indifferent. But these two formative realities must grow apace. Freedom without responsibility is the worst kind of slavery; responsibility without freedom—cringing conformity to parental ukase—is, if anything, a shade worse.

But telling kids what is right and wrong, even if accompanied by progressive respect for their freedom, is not enough. Kids are too immersed in the here and now—immediate kicks and thrills—to remember often or in time the complicated and abstract reasons that would suggest to them a better course of action. To help them remember, parents should, though not always, impose consequences with a minimum of pique.

The biggest debt weighing on parents is the obligation to give good, attractive, and convincing example—to live the truth themselves. Example is not only the proverbial best teacher, but, inasmuch as most kids seem to hail from Missouri, about the only one. If virtue is its own reward rightly understood, let the children begin to pick up, via osmosis, that selfishness backfires and generosity fulfills, that lesser pleasures foregone open the door to higher ones, that work works, that the greatest fulfillment awaits him who concentrates on fulfilling others, and so forth. When the child begins to correlate the moral lessons, he/she has been told with the cheerful example that is displayed, then parents can rest content that they have not shortchanged their children, that they have communicated the whole truth.

(From Brookfield Academy's KNIGHTS' NOTES, Winter '89) ▣



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## Pearls of Wisdom from the Past

(Editor's Note: I first came across the name of James Arrington Clay in William Reichert's *PARTISANS OF FREEDOM: A Study in American Anarchism* (1976). Clay, born in 1814, was grouped with the likes of Moses Harman and Ezra Heywood, and described as a libertarian, who when the "final chapter in the history of women's liberation is written... will at long last receive the acknowledgment" he is due as one or two of the "most faithful devotees of the idea that woman was created equal to man." Clay's first, and probably only, brush with the law came in 1854, when he was unjustly charged with adultery and sentenced to the county jail for six months. While he was imprisoned in Augusta, Maine, Clay wrote *A VOICE FROM PRISON OR, TRUTHS FOR THE MULTITUDE AND PEARLS FOR THE TRUTHFUL* (Boston: Bela Marsh, 1856).

The following excerpts from Clay's chapter, "Of Government" are of interest not only because they are over a century old, but also because they display Clay's keen insight into the nature of the political process and majority rule. Despite some awkwardness in expression, his rejection of violence, his understanding of the relationship of means and ends ("like begets like," as he puts it), and his insistence that evil-doers be left to suffer from their own actions, brands him clearly as a voluntarist.)

Now, I do not object to the majority ruling themselves as wisely or as foolishly as they are wise or foolish; but I do protest, and as conscientiously, too, as did our fathers against the rule of King George and his court, that any majority, or minority, exercise their laws over me, when I infringe not on the rights of other individual human beings. If liberty means anything desirable, it means individual liberty to think, speak, and act, independent of the thought, speech, or action, of any body of men, as well as independent of a pope, or king. And this freedom must be granted to every individual being ere we are a nation of freemen, as we claim to be. ...

Though we are members of one body, and no good or harm can come to one, without more or less affecting the whole, yet each has an individual life or existence which may be unlike any other individual's; therefore no other man, or number of men, can write a constitution or laws, with a surety that it meet the wants of any other being.

It is argued that the good of the whole requires the sacrifice

of individual freedom or rights. But it is a false position. The government is false that requires the sacrifice of any natural individual right for its own (100) being or welfare. The right of the individual beings must remain inviolate, else the good of the whole cannot be promoted, inasmuch as the whole is made up of these separate individuals.

Because I claim for each their natural individual rights to individual freedom of thought, word, or deed, I do not claim the right for any to do a wrong, even to themselves. But if they will do so, I ask the good not themselves to transgress the laws of freedom, but leave the transgressor free to overcome himself with his wrongs, rather than involve the good in a vain endeavor to overcome such a wrong, as all communities do who enact penal laws for the transgressor.

When the people shall learn what is true,—that wrong is no less so when committed by the whole number under the guise of government or law, than when perpetrated by individuals on other individuals, and that the tendency to evil is more certain,—they will have learned a truth of great worth to them. It is certain, when the good would restrain the evil, except by goodness, that they become like them, evil in some degree; and when they carry the restraint to murder for murder, the whole community approving of such become murderers to overcome murderers, which is as absurd as to pluck the second eye to give sight to one already blind. It is a well-known fact in history that the rigor of governments is productive of crime. It cannot be otherwise if like begets like. ...[101]

(T)he base of all political movements, which are a doing of evil to lessen evil, is wrong. When men shall learn their rights, they will know that minorities have rights as well as majorities; that every individual has rights, that no other individual, or number of individuals, has a right to trample on; and when they become wise, they will know that to trample on another, though it be one differing from all the remainder of the world, is to transgress the law of their own being, for which they suffer without a possibility of escape.

The rule of a majority may be as corrupt as the minority, and the rule in my next two neighbors, who would rule me because they are two and I one only, may be as despotic, corrupting and abasing, and as unworthy of me, as the Russian emperor's, or

*Continued on page 6*

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## The Voluntarist

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