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# The Voluntaryist

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

August 1995

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## Beyond The Reach of Authority

By Carl Watner

Voluntaryists today are faced with an American State which wants to control every aspect of their lives. The Pilgrims of 17th Century England were faced with a similar threat. No one could preach or publish a book without government license, or emigrate without permission under pain of imprisonment or property forfeiture. Their effort to found a community in the New World was an attempt to isolate themselves from the religious and statist authorities of the Old. They wanted little more than to be left alone and would not have departed England had they been left in peace. The story of the Pilgrim Fathers divides itself neatly into several different chapters. This article will review the ecclesiastic conflict which prompted them to leave England for Holland in 1608. At that time, Holland was a country free of religious persecution. Despite this fact, after more than a decade in Leyden, these separatists feared that they were losing their English identity and embarked on their colonizing effort to the New World. There, in Plymouth colony, they practiced a form of communism which was imposed upon them by their English financial backers. It was not until they resorted to a system which more closely approximated free enterprise that their success was assured. The purpose of this paper is to present a voluntaryist overview of the Pilgrim history in England, Holland, and the New World.

The English Reformation had nearly reached its climax when Queen Elizabeth ascended to the throne in 1558. By then a Protestant country, there remained some vestiges of Catholicism and it was the discontent with this popish heritage which led directly to the Puritan and separatist movements. The Anglican Church was challenged on two fronts. The Puritan attitude was that the State church had not been fully reformed and therefore the Puritans "pressed for further reformation of the church - in discipline, polity, and simplicity of ritual." The Puritan strategy was to work within the existing religious institutions and purify them of whatever "evils" they still harbored. On the other hand, there were the separatists or independents who began to argue for separate congregations when they saw no reforms forthcoming. As early as 1582, people like Robert Browne, who had published *A TREATISE OF REFORMATION WITHOUT TARRYING FOR ANY*, "argued for

independent congregations that would bind themselves by a covenant, would not attempt to embrace all the world but should gather men and women out of the world, and would have no relations with the state." While recognizing that the Puritans were well-intentioned, the separatists still believed that Puritan efforts could not change the nature of a statist-dominated religion. Though the Puritan reforms might be more to their liking, the separatists believed that the lesser of two evils was still evil. While the Puritans waged a battle to reform the existing church from within, the separatists left it. "The separatists had no mission to save any souls but their own." They were not concerned about society or the state.

One of the separatist congregations was formed at the village of Scrooby in Nottinghamshire in the late 1590's or early 1600's. It was led by William Brewster, a postal bureaucrat and Pastor John Robinson, a well-known Independent. The members of the Scrooby congregation suffered at the hands of the English authorities. They were harassed and persecuted and often had their religious meetings broken up. As William Bradford, one of their leaders at Leyden and then in Plymouth colony, put it many years after they left England:

They could not long continue in any peaceable condition, but were hunted and persecuted on every side. ... Some were taken and clapt up in prison, others had their houses besett and watcht night and day and hardly escaped their hands [until] ye most were faine to flie and leave their houses and habitations, and the means of their livelihood.

In the early 1590's, Parliament, under the guidance of Elizabeth, had passed an act which banished the separatists from England. As finally enacted, any person 16 years or older who had been absent from church services for one month, or dissuaded others from attending, or wrote or said anything against the authority of the crown in ecclesiastical matters, or attended any unlawful conventicle (which certainly was the case with services at Scrooby) was to be imprisoned without bail. After three months imprisonment, if that person were still not willing to conform to the Church of England, then the miscreant was to be banished from the kingdom, forfeiting all goods, chattels, and income from his or her real estate for life. "All convicted persons refusing to leave the realm, or returning from banishment without leave, were to suffer death as felons." The Puritans had little sympathy for the separatists, who they believed were

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## Potpourri from the Editor's Desk

### No. 1 "The Passport Swindle"

A national passport legitimizes and represents the arbitrary frontier of a particular nation. As property of the government that issues it, this license can be denied for virtually any reason. In essence, it is a control device, used by government to limit the movement of its citizens, and to regulate the entry and exit of "foreigners."

When you are issued a passport, you are actually giving something up—your inalienable right to "leave any country" and return again, confirmed by Article 13(2) in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In order to travel, you are forced to accept a bureaucratic device designed deliberately to control your movement. In legal terms, such a deceptive inducement to surrender a legal right is called fraud. Thus, if you have such a document, in a sense you have been robbed. To put it plainly, the national passport system is a swindle, the conscious theft of the individual's right to freedom of movement. In the world of nation-states, claims that citizens have freedom of travel are a hollow mockery. All states collude in perpetuating this fraud, beginning with their use of the word "passport" itself.

Garry Davis, *PASSPORT TO FREEDOM*,  
Washington: Seven Locks Press, 1992, p. 59.

### No. 2 "The Importance of Consent"

There were at least two explanations in the eighteenth century for a government's right to command. One was authority—naked force, conquest, usurpation, the patriarchal analogy. The other was the consent of the people. ...

It was a matter of conferring legitimacy on government. First, consent provided command with general concurrence. ...

Second, consent created obligation. Consent "is the parent of all Good Laws, and Just obligation to obey them." In fact, the Massachusetts House of Representatives argued, "the People must consent to Laws, before they can be obliged in Conscience to obey them." ... In other words, if it were not for the concept of consent, there would be no moral obligation to obey laws, only fear of coercion.

The third element of legitimacy, but a shade dif-

ferent from the last, was that laws received "their binding Force from the Consent of the People governed." That is, ..., the binding force of law depended on the consent of those to be bound by those laws.

- John Phillip Reid, *THE CONCEPT OF REPRESENTATION IN THE AGE OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989, pp. 17-18.

### No. 3 "Slaves of Choice"

Among attempts to engage the truly voluntary choices of the governed, tax incentives are surely the most effective. Their purpose is to direct the populace into taking certain favored courses and rejecting unfavored ones, and when people take certain of those courses, we can see their subjective opposition dissolve. That is, demonstrated and subjective preferences seem to become harmonized.

For example, under the guise of making taxation fairer and making "cheating" harder, the Reagan revision of the tax laws disallowed certain income tax deductions for parents unless they had obtained Social Security numbers for their small children. There was no requirement that children older than 2 have SSNs; there was merely a price to be paid if they lacked them. Far from protesting, the American public thronged to become eligible for those deductions. The state had created an incentive for its subjects to do voluntarily that which, historically, states have had to use the threat of force to accomplish.

The irony is that during the Carter regime, some in Congress recommended assigning SSNs to newborns as a means of addressing the burgeoning policy problem of illegal aliens. The proposal was rejected almost immediately because its transparent tyranny evoked so much protest. Less than 10 years later the transparent tyranny was occluded. Like the Carter-era proposal, the new tax measure had a semi-benign, reasonable cover, but unlike the earlier proposal there was nothing mandatory about it. It was enforced by the free choice of people trying merely to avoid what they saw as unnecessary expenditures. Thus, parents complied with the plan as certainly as if they had been commanded under threat of reprisal by the priests of Moloch, and the voices of opposition were silenced without a drop of blood being spilled.

—THE LAST DITCH, October 1994,  
Box 224, Roanoke, IN 46783.

### No. 4 "The Case for Persuasion: The Mind Cannot Be Forced"

What do we do when we know homeschoolers who we genuinely think are neglecting their children's educational needs? I see two choices: force or persuasion. Initiating legislation or turning parents over to state authorities falls under the domain of force. ... I contend the only ethical choice we have in these situations is to use persuasion. We provide information, create good examples, and present our convic-

tions persuasively. I also contend that persuasion is the most effective option for the same reason that the State may compel school attendance, but it cannot compel education, which is a different thing entirely. The mind cannot be forced. It must be convinced by reason. ...

Can we allow failure in homeschooling? Unfortunately with freedom inevitably comes the freedom to fail. Surely, with the growth of homeschooling we are going to see more homeschool 'failures.' But with a failure in homeschooling, responsibility for the outcome is clearly defined and quickly self-diagnosed and self-corrected. Homeschooling 'failures' are not forced on anyone else [as are the general failure of the public schools]. A failure is more important to the person who suffers the consequences of it than to someone else; therefore the responsibility for avoiding it is more appropriately placed in that person's hands. There are many failures in homeschooling, many self-corrections, too ... and ultimately some successes. This is our path toward learning. One has to be free in order to find success.

-Christine Tykeson, "Issues and Concerns," **THE INDEPENDENT FAMILY** (76 Precita Ave, Moss Beach, CA 94038), October 1994, p. 9.

#### **No. 5 "Education, Not Legislation"**

I think cultivation of common sense is where we should focus our attention. Parents be aware that your kids have access to information that would probably give you chills if you were to find it in their possession. There's little you can do about the availability of this info, even if you live in a bucolic community far away from the urban jungle. But take a lesson from bikers who when fighting helmet laws, always say EDUCATION NOT LEGISLATION. In other words no law in the world is gonna keep your kids from getting their hands on drugs, weapons, or dangerous information. But the knowledge you pass along to your kids, that elusive commodity known as common sense, might just keep them from doing something incredibly stupid and harmful. You don't do your kids any favors by pretending that drugs, weapons, and potentially dangerous information don't exist. If you find certain materials or information frightening then educate yourself about it and then educate your kids about why they should avoid playing with explosives for instance until they're old enough to be responsible for their own errors. Don't jump all over them for being understandably curious, and above all try to behave like YOU have some common sense yourself

—YOUR FREEDOM, October 1994,  
Box 54562, Oklahoma City, OK 73154.

#### **No. 6 "Nonviolent Resistance and Civilian-Based Defense"**

The role of civilian protest and direct action in

recent anti-communist revolutions lends a new credibility to the idea of nonviolent resistance. It would go too far to attribute the demise of communism purely to nonviolent resistance. But it was one important and neglected factor in the greatest triumph of freedom in the twentieth-century. Classical liberals should study the lessons that it teaches. In particular, they should learn how freedom may be defended against tyrannical governments. A central lesson here is that even when the government has the weapons, there is something that it cannot seize: the voluntary compliance of its citizens. Without it, maintaining power becomes costly or even impossible. But, as we have seen, governments almost instinctively sense this risk and strive to prevent it from arising. As La Boetie explains, "it has always happened that tyrants, in order to strengthen their power, have made every effort to train their people not only in obedience and servility toward themselves, but also in adoration." All that is necessary to prevent tyranny is to let the citizenry come to know its own strength. Or, in the timeless words of La Boetie, "From all these indignities [of tyranny], such as the very beasts of the field would not endure, you can deliver yourselves if you try, not by taking action, but merely by willing to be free. Resolve to serve no more, and you are at once freed. I do not ask that you place hands upon the tyrant to topple him over, but simply that you support him no longer; then you will behold him, like a great Colossus whose pedestal has been pulled away, fall of his own weight and break into pieces."

—Bryan Caplan in the  
**HUMANE STUDIES REVIEW**,  
Summer 1994,  
4084 University Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030.

### **Beyond The Reach of Authority**

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the reason behind the passage of this legislation. The Puritans themselves were eventually hoping to have their own religious system adopted by Parliament. As the separatists became more numerous and outspoken, the possibility of this happening became remote, because Parliament confused the separatist activity with that of the Puritans.

The separatists remained deeply convinced that association with the Church or the Puritans was dangerous to their spiritual welfare. In fact, their attitude was that this represented a compromise with the truth and was a failure to observe God's ordinances. Therefore, most of the Scrooby congregants eventually concluded that they must leave England if they were to retain body and soul. They were also concerned about the welfare of their children and were determined not to let the State dominate their childrens' minds. Were they to stay in England, they

would rather be illegal and persecuted than be poor parents to their children. Thus it was that they decided to leave England "for the freest place on earth at that time - Holland." But this was easier decided than actually done.

The law of England not only hounded the separatists on account of their religious beliefs. The mercantilist economic policy of Elizabeth prohibited them from carrying any sort of money out of the country, and prevented them from exporting goods without prior authorization. It was difficult to secure official permission to emigrate on economic grounds because the authorities viewed it as a permanent loss to the realm. The religious authorities were reluctant to allow them to emigrate because the English dissenters already in Holland were "using the press" and "flooding England with heresies and working more mischief to the hierarchy than if they had remained at home." The Dutch authorities refused to interfere with freedom of the press and the English prelates who were bent on enforcing conformity could do nothing but try to prevent further emigration.

Since the separatists rightfully believed that they would not be granted permission to emigrate (on either religious or economic grounds) "they resolved to go without permission, and were forced therefore to flee 'like criminals or conspirators'." And they suffered for it. They not only faced the problem of finding jobs and learning a new language in a new country, but had to leave relatives, friends, all worldly possessions, and everything familiar to them.

Leaving England, itself, was an ordeal. On their first attempt they hired the ship of an English sea captain. After missing their appointed rendezvous, he finally picked them up in the night, but then turned them over to the English authorities. As Bradford put it:

[W]hen he had them, and their goods aboard; he betrayed them: having before hand comploted with the Searchers and other Officers so to do. Who took them, and put them into open boats; and there rifled and ransacked them; searching them to their shirts for money; yea, even the women further than became modesty.

This occurred in October 1607. All those fleeing, including women and children, were jailed until the Privy Council in London informed the local magistrates what was to be done with them. After about a month, most of them were freed, though seven of the leaders were kept in prison for a longer time. By the Spring of 1608, these, too, were apparently freed because a second attempt was made to leave England. This time they made an agreement with a Dutchman to transport them. The Dutch ship met them at the appointed time, but the women and children were stranded in a boat which had beached in a small estuary. Meanwhile the Dutch captain proceeded to load some of the men onboard. In the interval, the

English customs officials appeared on shore and the Dutchman pulled anchor, much to the distress of the male separatists on board, who had to leave their womenfolk behind. Those men remaining on shore fled from the troops, except for those few who remained to assist the women and children. Bradford in his chronicle related the fear and turmoil created by this second failure to leave England: menfolk separated from the families, and the women and children all arrested.

Being thus apprehended, they were hurried from one place to another and from one Justice [of the Peace] to another: till, in the end, they knew not what to do with them. For to imprison so many women and innocent children, for no other cause, many of them, but that they must go with their husbands, seemed to be unreasonable: and all would cry out to them. And to send them home again was as difficult; for they alleged, as the truth was, they had no homes to go to: for they had either sold, or otherwise disposed of their houses and livings.

The plight of the separatists became well-known throughout England. Their dignity and goodly character spoke well for them and left a deep impression on the minds of many. Eventually they were freed, for the various jailers knew not what to do with them. In short, it made the authorities look foolish to hold onto a group of harmless women and children. The separatists did not lose their resolve and in the end, notwithstanding all their difficulties, they all managed to reach Holland. Instead of emigrating en masse, each family or small groups of families went on their own; "some at one time, and some at another, and some in one place and some in another." Thus it was that they reached Amsterdam sometime in 1608.

Here they found an already existing congregation of Brownists (after Robert Browne) or Independents who shared a strong belief in the separation of church and state. But the former congregation suffered from too much internal dissension and within the year, the Scrooby congregants decided to move to Leyden, where they hoped to live in religious peace. Leyden was a city noted for its learning and culture, and the newcomers from Scrooby were readily accepted. Though economic circumstances and lack of familiarity with the language dictated that they accept low-paying jobs, the separatists readily established themselves in both mercantile and academic circles. "Independent of outside support and sustained by their own labors in an alien country, the Pilgrims proved that they were capable of facing hardship and surviving." During their stay at Leyden they had ample opportunity to imbibe the free spirit of the Dutch. There was no denial of the liberty of the press in Holland, as in England. And above all they found "in Holland that 'freedom of Religion for all men'

which they had sought and for which they had left their English homes." The libertarian spirit of Leyden was evinced by a statement of the city magistrates issued in 1581:

Liberty has always consisted in uttering our sentiments freely; and the contrary has always been considered the characteristic of tyranny. Reason, which is the adversary of all tyrants, teaches us that truth can be as little restrained as light.

In effect Holland, and the city of Leyden in particular, was a school of preparation for the still greater challenges the separatists would face in the New World. Their move to Holland and their experiences there served to act as a filter through which only those truly committed to the separatist cause would follow.

As the years in Leyden passed, their numbers dwindled. The old saw no prospect of returning to England and the young were being unduly influenced by the Dutch, especially by becoming soldiers or sailors. Many longed for the protection of the English flag (especially in view of the likely prospect of war breaking out between Holland and Spain during the early 1620's) and many feared that they would lose their English identity. In short, during their 12 years in the Netherlands, "their hearts ached with homesickness for the shores of England. ... They had to exert stoical control to resist the temptation to flee the Low Countries with their strange tongues and customs and the drudgery of menial labor, ..., all for the sake of the right to defend the truth as they saw it, to worship their God in peace, and to be free from the control of despots."

So it was that in 1620, the final decision was made to emigrate from Holland to the New World. Much discussion and planning had preceded the event. Pastor Robinson, William Brewster, and William Bradford, among others had explored the possibility of emigrating to the Dutch holdings in the New World, but nothing came of this. The Pilgrims were not wealthy and did not have enough money to finance their own colony in the New World. Therefore they sought the backing of capitalists and entrepreneurs

who would be interested in financing their venture. The prospect of furs and fishing were the main commercial inducements for their mercantile backers. Through the Brewster family's connection "with Sir Edwin Sandys, treasurer of the London Company, they secured two patents authorizing them to settle in the northern parts of the company's jurisdiction" in North America. Eventually they reached an agreement with a group of merchants represented by a London iron merchant, Thomas Weston.

"Weston's plan was to form a sort of joint stock company to raise funds to equip the venture and support the projected" commercial plantation, which the Pilgrims envisioned founding. Those who only invested in the project were referred to as Adventurers, and those who actually sailed were called the Planters. The values of the shares was set at 10 pounds and every Planter was assigned one share, in virtue of his or her personal stake in the colony. "The plantation was to be run as a joint stock corporation for seven years." The original, unaltered agreement which the Leyden Pilgrims negotiated with Weston called for the distribution of capital and accumulated profits among the Adventurers and Planters at the end of seven years (in proportion to their holding of shares in the corporation). The houses and land brought under cultivation were not to be distributed, but to revert to the Planters. "While the Planters were to work in general for the Company, or Corporation of Adventurers, they were to have two days a week for their own private employment."

Apparently Weston believed in the idea that "by working for the good of all, the welfare of each would be promoted." Robert Cushman, the negotiator for the separatists in London, feared that the whole enterprise would be imperilled unless he agreed to amend the original agreement in accord with Weston's desires. The clause that each Planter should have two days of labor per week to his own credit was struck out. Additionally, a new proposal was inserted that houses, land, and garden plots should be included in the division of assets at the end of the seven years, rather than be reserved to those who had done the productive work to create them. Pastor Robinson, in particular, objected to these changes. He pointed out that these changes placed all the members of the colony on the same footing, "whereas in fact 'all men are not of one condition'." In effect, the Planters were to become bond servants of the Company for the length of seven years. Each shareholder was rated equally, based on his holdings, regardless of the fact that the Planters had risked their lives (and in some cases their fortunes) on an ocean voyage and then contributed seven years of labor for the Company. "The two points on which Cushman had yielded were thus the only avenues of-escape from bondage and the only source of incentive to an able and enterprising man to improve land and property."



As it turned out, the Leyden group never did actually sign the agreement which Cushman had amended. When they left for America in September 1620, they were already on poor terms with the merchants on that account. "Yet once they reached Plymouth they honored the agreement Cushman had involved them in, with consequences that nearly altered the whole course of American history." The difficulties in finding a commercial sponsor and then in locating ships to transport the Pilgrims (first from Holland back to England, and then from England to the New World) resulted in a falling off of those in Leyden who were willing to face the risks. Other volunteers (who were not religiously motivated) had to be found. Fewer than one half of the 102 passengers onboard the Mayflower were actually of separatist faith.

The story of the Pilgrim's crossing the Atlantic and the signing of the Mayflower Compact is an oft-related story. When they finally sighted land in mid-November 1620, the Pilgrims were far to the north of their proposed colony. Since they had no "legal" right from the merchant Adventurers or the English crown to settle at Cape Cod, they improvised their own agreement which obligated the signers to "combine themselves into 'a civill body politick' by virtue of which they are to have the power to 'enacte, constitute and frame such just & equally lawes, ordinances, acts, constitutions & offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meete & convenient for the generall good of the Colonie, unto which we promise all due submission and obedience'." Though thought to be one of the earliest political documents which embraces the concept of "the consent of the governed," it is interesting to note that at least seven of the male servants and two seamen did not sign the agreement, and that newcomers to the colony were never required to assent to the document.

The first three years of the Plymouth colony found the Planters in desperate straits. Supplies from the merchant Adventurers were not forthcoming. Disease and illness claimed almost half of those who had arrived onboard the Mayflower. Though assisted by friendly Indians and instructed in the art of catching fish and planting corn, the basic trouble in the colony "lay in the insistence of the adventurers that the colony be operated on a communal basis, everyone working for 'the general' rather than for himself." The Pilgrims were operating on a socialist or communist basis imposed on them as a business arrangement by the Company in London. It was this communal program of forced labor, without personal profit, which caused many of the initial problems in the colony.

[N]o matter how hard a man worked or how much he loafed he got the same diet as everyone else. The colonists could not own land. Theoretically they were allowed no time to work for themselves. The houses they had

built were not their own, and any improvements they might make would pass to the merchants at a division to be made seven years hence. Private property, except for a few non-productive personal belongings, was abolished.

Finally in 1623, faced with the consequences of such a system, Bradford and the other chief leaders of the Pilgrims, took it on their own responsibility to change the system. Knowing that he was breaking the agreement with the Adventurers, Bradford announced that every man should raise his own corn and no longer draw from the community storehouse. Every family was assigned a portion of land and soon most were at work. As Bradford related in his chronicles:

[T]hey began to think how they might raise as much corne as they could, and obtain a beter crope then they had done, that they might not still thus languish in miserie. At length, after much debate of things, the Governor (...) gave way that they should set corne every man for his own perticuler, and in that regard trust to them selves; in all other things to goe on in the generall way as before. And so assigned to every family a parcell of lands according to the proportion of their number for that end, ... This had very good success, for it made all hands industrious, so as much more corne was planted then other waise would have bene by any means the Governor or any other could use, and saved him a great deall of trouble, and gave farr better contente. The women now wente willingly into the field, and tooke their little-ones with them to set corne, which before would aledg weaknes, and inability; whom to have compelled would have bene thought great tiranie and oppression.

The experience that was had in this commone course and condition, tried sundrie years, and that amongst godly and sober men, may well evince the vanitie of that conceite of Plato & other ancients, applauded by some of later times;—that the taking away of propertie, and bringing in communitie into a comone wealth, would make them happy and flourishing; as if they were wiser than God. For this comunitie (so farr as it was) was found to breed much confusion & discontent, and retard much employment that would have been to their benefite and comforte.

Though not free of problems, from this time on, the colony was able to maintain itself free of the threat of starvation. Although it has been mentioned, it is important to emphasize that the communal system of the Pilgrims was an entrepreneurial decision made in London before their departure. What is so interesting is that "the early failure of the colony did

not derive from a lack of resources, but specifically from a lack of private ownership of those resources." In private hands, the same resources produced at least enough for everyone to survive; whereas under communal ownership near starvation was the result. Despite Bradford's decision to restore some semblance of private property to the Planters, the colony's commercial affairs remained highly centralized and controlled in his hands. A monopoly of trading rights was vested in the leaders of the colony, at least until 1640, and it always remained impossible for any individual settler to purchase land from the Indians. There were regulations that "covered the entire economic activity of the colony. Nothing was done or could be done which was not subject to the direct control of the leaders."

This paints an intriguing picture of the Pilgrims' attempt to get beyond the reach of English authority. It seems they wished to escape the grasp of ecclesiastic authority, but were not willing to forego centralized direction of their own economic affairs. In fact, in 1635, a proclamation of King Charles I, attempted to stop the flow of Puritan and separatist emigrants to Holland and the New World:

Whereas it appeareth that great numbers of his Majesty's Subjects have been and are every Year transported into ... America, ... and there settled themselves, some of them with their Families and whole Estates; amongst which numbers there are many idle and refractory Humours, whose only End is to live as much as they can without the Reach of Authority:

Wee having according to the Power intrusted by his Majesty ... considered how necessary it is, for weighty and important Reasons to take careful and effectual order, for the stopping of such promiscuous and disorderly departing out of the Realm, ...

In truth, it might be observed that the Pilgrims came to the New World "to escape the necessity of tolerating those who disagreed with them." This was certainly one of their reasons for removing themselves from Amsterdam to Leyden. They were deeply religious and had been "baptized under fire" during their imprisonments in England. They were severely Biblical and though narrow in some respects from our modern point of view, "for their time, they had a remarkable breadth of view. They sought liberty, indeed, for themselves. ..." even though they were not always willing to extend toleration to other non-conformists.

The Pilgrims were clearly men and women of courage and conviction, and stood ready to sacrifice not only their property, but their lives, for their principles. They refused to compromise their religious beliefs when they rejected the Puritan efforts to reform the Anglican Church from within. Since they saw the

State church as an evil, they refused to have anything to do with it, except to withdraw their sanction. While in England, they violated no one's rights. However, they were viewed as a threat to the English State, since the authorities realized that the religious freedom which they demanded for themselves could only lead to "sedition and hellish errors." The power of personal example was their only attempt at proselytizing. They did not force themselves on others or preach to others, but their manner and deportment was above reproach. They set high standards for themselves and the members of their congregations. Their position was that wrongness or evil in others could not threaten them. They simply tried to hold fast to their own ideals and mission in life. Rather than wait for the State to permit them to worship God in their own way, they recognized that they had to take matters into their own hands. In deciding to emigrate to foreign lands, they realized that freedom for them meant self-control and self-responsibility. The English State tried to obstruct their efforts, but in the end found it futile to stifle the determined efforts of those who had made up their minds and proceeded to act accordingly. Each Pilgrim lit one small candle in the darkness. And from these candles many others have been kindled. They had little prospect for success when they departed their homeland; yet they were willing to do so. Voluntaryists should take heart, for in their example can be found the strength of spirit and faith in right means that will ultimately sustain all those who chose to depart the lands of their birth for freer places. ▣

[Author's Note: This article was originally written in May 1985, after I attended a Freedom School given by Kevin Cullinane. It was re-worked in 1995, after I read Kevin's essay on "The Role of Religion in Successful Secession," (submitted to the Mises' Institute's conference on "Secession, State, and Economy") in which he describes the separatist movement as "the first secession in American history."]

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