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# The Voluntaryist

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Whole Number 147

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

4th Quarter 2010

## **Declaration of Renunciation and Severance of U.S. Citizenship**

by Jeff Knaebel, Sovereign Individual of the Earth

This Declaration, made at New Delhi, India on 19 June 2009, WITNESSETH:

To the people of this Earth, my fellow human beings, my brothers and sisters, in memory of Black Elk and Chief Joseph, and with special respect to the Grandmothers and Elders of all indigenous communities;

I, Jeff Knaebel, hereby make this Declaration of Severance and Dissolution of all bonds between myself and the Government of the United States of America. I renounce my birth certificate - I renounce my citizenship - and reject all claims of whatsoever nature made by the United States against me. I am not government property and I am not a criminal. I am a peace-loving human being who is finished with being a slave to the Corporate Warfare State. I am not a citizen of any Government. I renounce all of them.

I hereby destroy my United States passport by which the United States government claims control of my movement upon this earth and, thus, lays claim upon my right to exist. I will place the shredded remains of my passport upon the monument of Mahatma Gandhi. I have chosen this monument because it is a symbol that all mankind can recognize: of nonviolent resistance to immoral, corrupt, and violent Governments.

By this deliberate act of rebellion and sedition, I hope to free myself and alert mankind to the dangers it has created by obeying Governments of the world. My refusal to remain a tax-compliant accomplice to State murder will be considered treason against the United States. The choice is this, or treason against human life itself. My life is not about supporting the cold-blooded murder of women and children.

No permission is required to renounce that which I never sought in the first place, for which I never entered a contract, and which is imposed upon me against my will. Having declared myself not a citizen I am, therefore, not a citizen. Citizenship is either voluntary or it is forcible slavery.

The United States government is incomprehensibly malevolent and destructive. It takes our money, our identities and our lives. It gives us back corruption, war, heinous crimes and lies. This government has no moral right to exist. It ought to be abolished without further human bloodshed.

The Nation State is a criminal organization which must be opposed in its very concept. It is impossible to reform a system that is built upon a foundation of lies and violence -- one whose health and continuance depends upon endless war. The system must be altogether abolished. It is irredeemably evil.

The State represents a terminal disease of human consciousness that is anti-life, anti-ethics and suicidal for the human species. It is a sick, addictive co-dependency between its citizens and parasitic lying, murdering, psychopathic politicians.

Blind obedience to incompetent, deceitful, violent and morally depraved authority is a clear case of mental disease. Eckhart Tolle, Gopi Krishna and other morally advanced beings have diagnosed the United States government as pathologically criminally insane.

All political authority is arbitrary: arbitrary as to the form it takes; arbitrary as to the boundaries it establishes; arbitrary as to the limits of its jurisdiction; and arbitrary as to the taxation it collects. If one refuses to bow, to obey, to pay one's taxes, to use Government travel documents one will ultimately be placed in jail or die resisting arrest.

Even in its most equitable form, it is impossible for government to disassociate itself from evil. The State has been conceived in violence and is maintained by lies and violence. Its every act can only be criminal. Unless the right to ignore the State is recognized, its citizens become tainted accomplices in its deeds.

From the most democratic to the most totalitarian form of government there is ultimately no difference among the powers they exercise. The essence of the State is the threat and use of deadly force against those who choose not to comply with its edicts.

No Government rightfully owns the territory it monopolizes. It has stolen whatever land it lays claims to. Everything it has, the State has stolen or plundered. It prevents peaceful people from establishing their own voluntary cooperative economic and social relationships. The purpose of assigning nationality is to control a mass of captive taxpayers in order to maintain the large military establishment required to keep a citizenry in a state of fearful submission to the Power Structure of money.

Why should a system of structurally compulsively violent political authority be preferred to a cooperative system in which human beings live according to the Natural Law of equal liberty? A coercive government has no legitimate authority over me. None.

*(continued on page 6)*

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# The Voluntaryist

Editor: Carl Watner

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## Why The West?

By Paul Rosenberg

[Editor's Note: In early May 2009, I read a book, *PRODUCTION VS PLUNDER*, written by Paul Rosenberg, a subscriber to THE VOLUNTARYIST. (See [www.VeraVerba.com](http://www.VeraVerba.com) for ordering information.) The short section entitled "The Foundation Is Established" (pp. 137-139) reminded me of an article that I considered writing a number of years ago (but which never came to fruition). The idea for such an article was sparked by another essay, one written by Jim Powell. It was titled "Why Has Liberty Flourished in the West?" and appeared in *CATO POLICY REPORT*, Volume 22, Number 5, Sept/Oct 2000. (Available in pdf format on the web.) One of the initial questions I had about Jim's thesis was: Is it proper to assume that liberty did flourish in the West? Perhaps it is correct to say that it did, if you compare it to other world civilizations and cultures. The answer, however, would be much different if you compare it to an imagined world where there were no coercive governments. I wrote Paul to see if he was interested in addressing this topic. Here is his overview.]

### TWO QUESTIONS AND THEIR IMPORTANCE

- 1) Has liberty flourished in the West?
- 2) Why was it at least in the running (compared to other civilizations)?

Before we examine the answers to these questions, it is important to understand that the West has led humanity forward in many ways. Consider the following recent improvements in human life:

- More food and more variety of foods. (Modern grocery stores.)
- The ability to store food. (Refrigeration.)
- Better cooking techniques. (Stoves, ovens, microwaves.)
- Healthy environments. (Central heat, central air, no open fires inside.)
- The availability of immense power, almost anywhere. (Electricity.)
- The ability to travel. (Affordable autos, airplanes, etc.)
- Increased knowledge. (Books, newspapers, the History Channel.)

- Increased communication. (Radio, cell phones, Internet, etc.)
- Machines that perform mundane chores. (Washing machines, etc.)

All of the above were developed in the West, and are (more or less directly) the result of increased liberty. So, this is not only an interesting question, but an important one.

### WHAT IS LIBERTY?

We must begin with the contrast between liberty *and* coercive governments. The idea that a government provides liberty is false, although it is close enough to a true statement to confuse many people.

Governments, at their very best, provide protection against external military threats. This may certainly have benefits, but it is *not* liberty – it is military protection. It is important to separate the two. Consider it this way:

Hitler attacked the USSR in 1941. The USSR eventually drove the Nazis back and won military safety for its people, but those people were certainly not “free.” The military victory did not establish liberty – it established the rule of Stalin, probably the number two killer in world history.

Liberty is the ability to live without interference, restricted only by the equal rights of others.

Being militarily safe is useful, but it is not the same as liberty.

### HAS LIBERTY FLOURISHED IN THE WEST?

The short answer is, “yes, it has.” The ideas of individual rights, secure private property, freedom of speech, a free press, freedom of religion, equality before the law and free trade are all Western ideas.

What I mean by “equality before the law,” is that justice applies to every person equally – rich or poor, from a good family or not, with powerful friends or without, and so on. Law, in general, can be useful in some forms and tyrannical in others. Law need not be conjoined with the State. Indeed, if law were separate from State (as was often the case in centuries past), it would be a great tool for justice and liberty. But, this is a long discussion, for another time and place.

While it is true that liberty flourished in the West, it most certainly has not flourished without restraint. We do have States, after all, and States are organizations that may only survive by forcibly taking the property of others – which is definitely contrary to liberty. Aside from a scattered few places – and for short moments at that – we have not had full liberty. We have, however, had partial liberties and have benefited from them.

Liberty has certainly not thrived as much as many of us would like, but it has thrived to a considerable and useful extent.

### WHY IN THE WEST?

This is the interesting question. I have no single,

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absolutely certain answer, but there are many partial answers, some of them going back into pre-history. I'm arranging these in no particular order. I'm certain that all of these are significant, but I'm not sure how to rank them.

### **Language**

Western (Indo-European) grammar, with its categories of gender, its sharp distinction of person and number, and its great emphasis on chronological tense, instills a certain level of logical attitude toward life. In contrast, the languages of the Far East emphasize relative class levels.

This is probably a larger issue than you would first think it to be. What people assume in their very speech has a powerful effect upon them, even if thoroughly unnoticed. This is especially true because language is acquired in early childhood, with many subsequent ideas being built upon its foundation.

This is a well-known issue among professional manipulators. One of their key phrases has long been, "Control the vocabulary and you control the argument." For example, as John Hasnas explains in *Voluntaryist* #123 (page 8), by associating the idea of voluntary order with the State, the possibility of a non-State order is almost completely eliminated. When someone with a new idea comes along, he or she is derided as being "self-styled," as if anything unapproved by the established order is evil. Again, this is powerful stuff, and most people shortcut their thinking by repeating slogans that they have heard others use successfully.

### **Separation**

The Western tradition features heroes who separated themselves from everyone else. Abraham was commanded to separate himself. Moses commanded Israel to be separate from all other peoples. Jesus commanded his students to remain separate from the teachings of the other Jewish sects, and so on.

This is a potent idea. Separation allows new ideas to develop and permits people to move forward with much less internal restraint. After all, following the examples of Abraham, Moses and Jesus has been an effective moral defense at most places and times in the West.

And there is one more crucial element here: The separation ideal declares that the group is not to be followed and that *unity is not a morally-superior strategy*. This undermines collectives of all types and the ever-so-common intimidation that keeps most people tethered to the tribe. It is this "tether" that often destroys individuality before it is fully formed.

### **Subversive Religions**

The religions of the West - Judaism and Christianity - are subversive religions, even though most of their leaders would rather not admit it. (They must generally support the State in order to get favors such as tax exemption.)

Abraham fought kings; Moses defied the Egyptian king, and the twelve tribes of Israel lived without one for several hundred years; the prophet Samuel warned against a king; Jesus died as an enemy of the State; the first Christians were all enemies of the State; and so on.

Judaism and Christianity are not good religions for rulers, nor are they good for State cohesion. These are religions that very specifically enthrone justice above rulership.

For this reason and others, people who adhere to these religions are more likely than most others to risk their safety for righteousness and progress. "Seeking the praise of God rather than men" is a powerful thing.

An excellent example of risking one's safety for what is right is the English hero "Freeborn John," a.k.a., John Lilburne. (Jim Powell goes into some detail on this hero in the article referred to above.) Lilburne was brought into the English justice system for unlicensed publishing, and refused to plead until he had heard the charges leveled against him. In other words, he refused to incriminate himself, as was common at the time.

Freeborn John was whipped, dragged by an oxcart, placed in stocks (where he handed out pamphlets), and finally thrown in jail. He still refused to surrender his "freeborn rights." Lilburne actually spent most of his adult life in jail, but, thanks to him, both English and American law features the right not to incriminate one's self. Not surprisingly, Lilburne was a very religious man, at various times a Quaker and a Puritan.

### **Farming**

Westerners have almost always been farmers, as opposed to herdsmen or hunters.

Farmers tend to see the world as a positive-sum game and nomads as a zero-sum game. The important thing about this is that positive- or zero-sum assumptions form in human minds and – if not analyzed and adjusted – color wide areas of thought. This affects all sorts of opinions and judgments. People take these basic views of the world as givens: things they don't need to waste time examining; things that are considered to be known. This builds great differences in the thoughts of the farmers and the nomads.

Young nomads were instructed to *take*, from a world of limited resources.

Young farmers were instructed to use the world intelligently and to *create* food.

Farmers learn to live cooperatively. They help build each other's barns, share tools, lend their expertise for repairing their neighbor's equipment, and so on. They also respect each other's property lines. Herdsmen, on the other hand, tend to mistrust their neighbors and to hide information from them. If the nomad finds good grazing land, he does not share that knowledge. If he finds a hidden water hole, he does not disclose the location. Cooperation is less likely and plunder more common among

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nomads. Rather obviously, liberty is the fellow-traveler of cooperation and the opponent of plunder.

### **Cold**

Most Western cultures are also northern cultures. There have been a number of interesting theories put forth as to why most advances are made in cold places. Certainly the inability to be lazy without freezing plays a major role. Active people, after all, produce more than inactive people, and in cold places, inactivity can be fatal. This is an interesting area of study.

### **New Continents**

In the 17th Century, people in the West found an opportunity to flee all expectations and re-create civilization on a new continent. This was a very important and powerful force in the West. In our current situation, people with radically new ideas are considered dangerous to one extent or another. What if they could simply leave, go to some new, un-ruled place and try living their new way? What new strategies might be revealed as superior to thought-choking obedience?

In the 17th Century, freedom-seekers could leave their homelands. Bear in mind that this was a much more complete “leaving” than is possible in our time. A fitting example of this is the modern tax protester. We could say to him, “If you don’t like it here, go somewhere else,” but this is actually no choice at all for the tax protester – the deal is the same everywhere. If an American tax protester goes to Canada, he finds a nearly identical situation. If he goes to Germany, it is the roughly same, and the same can be said, more or less, for all of the earth’s two hundred States. If, however, there was an empty continent available, the same tax protester could simply leave and do his best to build a new life however he wished.

So, a great many such people came to the New World, bringing their wild new ideas and transformative energies with them. The New World of North America owes a much bigger debt to the ‘Crazies’ of Europe than many ‘respectable’ types would like to acknowledge.

### **Disasters**

This answer goes fairly deep into speculation, but it is worth mentioning.

For the last half-million years, our planet has experienced a string of at least four Ice Ages. In each of them, a huge portion of the earth has been covered with ice and snow and the rest of the planet was much colder than it is now. In the last Ice Age, what are now Indianapolis and St. Louis were covered with glaciers – a lot like Greenland’s current condition. Even the areas where soil was exposed were much colder than they are now.

The Ice Ages were mega-disasters in the north, but not for the equatorial areas. The entry and exit from an ice age is problematic for tropical areas, but that was a very short time compared to the

overall 100,000 year cycle, and still no comparison to areas farther from the Equator.

As mentioned earlier, Western culture is primarily northern culture as well, and it is certainly a culture with strong disaster images, as exemplified by the story of Noah’s flood. This type of image cultivates a feeling of non-stability – all things will not remain as they always have been. They have massively changed in the past and they will massively change again in the future.

It can be argued – though I’m not aware of any really pertinent evidence – that tropical cultures lacked this disaster model, and were more likely to accept the status quo, as “things have always been this way, and always shall.” A northern Christian, for example, would be far less likely to accept this argument; assured that – at the very least – the Second Coming would be likely to occur soon and totally reset everything. Even the Roman Catholic Church – the grand enforcer of sameness during the Middle Ages – struggled with this problem.

### **God Versus State**

Since the Judeo-Christianity of the West was a subversive religion (as mentioned above), it has very often struggled against the State. Normally this is thought of as the State preventing the Church from turning into an oppressive theocracy (which has certainly occurred), but that is only one side of the issue. When massive ideologies (like Church and State) oppose each other, it opens up cracks, where liberty can flourish. (And they do oppose each other, since both compete for the full respect and devotion of the people.)

God has been a significant idea throughout western history - the big idea at the top of the ideological “food chain.” That makes it very useful as a moral and intellectual weapon against other ideologies that wish to control men. The idea of God is very difficult to overpower. This allows “God” to serve as a protection from other dominators. Such uses of the God-idea provide open space in which liberty can prosper and grow. This is exactly what happened in the West between the 14th and 20th Centuries. Here are a few examples:

- The “rule of law” formed when the Church saw it as a tool they could use to keep princes in line. Remember that there was very little man-made legislation during the Middle Ages, and that “naturally” discovered law was not the handmaiden of the State. In those times, the law was actually sovereign above the prince. (But, again, this subject requires a more detailed explanation than we can give it here.)

- One of the pivotal elements in the growth of western civilization has been the role of personal initiative. Individuals took it upon themselves to pursue the things they wanted. They did not wait to get permission from the civil or religious authorities. One of

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the first places where this initiative surfaced was in the universities of Western Europe. For example, men like Peter Abelard (founding father of the University of Paris), took it upon themselves to create better ways of learning, and sold their services to individual customers. Although the universities eventually received charters from popes, emperors, and kings, they were originally self-governing private enterprises in which the teachers had to please their customers (the students) or otherwise lose their patronage.

- The medieval guilds played Church against State and existed in the gap between the two spheres, first aligned more with Church, then more with State, and always with a foot in each. Some of these guilds, such as the Merchant's Guild, built massive trade networks throughout Europe, especially in the north. They were careful to publicly express their piety, which kept some princes at bay. ("We're close with the Church, don't mess with us.") And being adaptable merchants, they were able to shift tactics frequently. Not all guilds were as effective and decent as the Merchant's Guild, but they were able to create some open space between Church and State, within which they could operate.

These situations were always strained and hazardous, but they did provide free space for liberty to grow... and grow it did!

### **ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS**

I am confident that this list contains most of the core reasons why liberty flourished in the West, but I would like to deal with a few loose ends before I finish:

#### **Why Not The East?**

I can give you two partial answers:

- The languages. Looking at the world in terms of status puts humans in mental chains and sometimes in physical chains as well. It keeps minds from functioning freely. This slows the growth of liberty to a very significant degree.

- Less farming. Nomadic civilizations are less conducive to liberty, and there have been more of them in huge areas of the East. The fact that large areas of the East were less than ideally suited to farming was merely chance.

#### **Is The West The Ideal Culture?**

No, it certainly is not. We have plenty of deeply ingrained problems in our midst. The difference with the West is that it was less bad, not that it was ideal.

Regardless of all the obstacles, liberty is always powerfully present in some men. In the majority, however, it is present to an extent, but is mostly suppressed. Even in the "less bad" West, liberty only flourished at moments, and was usually stomped-out at the earliest convenient time. Most modern Westerners would run in horror from full freedom; many would beg for a strongman to crush it.

Huge numbers of Westerners care more about six-packs and big-screen TVs than they do about liberty. They don't even know what real liberty is; nor would very many be willing to sacrifice anything for it.

### **HUMAN NATURE**

The truly stunning thing about liberty is that it harmonizes with the highest and best functions of human nature. A book would be required to address this subject decently, but the point is an important one: *The parts of men's natures that do not resonate with liberty are those which have been manipulated, corrupted, or left undeveloped.*

Liberty is the essential soil for an advanced human existence. It can flourish in no other.

Thank God liberty found some cracks in the West. It is our job to understand this and to create new cracks, then to break up the pavements and let liberty thrive unhindered – in both the West and in the East.

We have been like plants that struggle to grow through the cracks of a concrete parking lot. Humanity will never rise toward its awesome potential until we clear space to spread our roots and branches. Liberty, and liberty alone, provides the fertile ground we need.

Get to it! 

"There's no real difference between those in power and those who are seeking power."

- Daniel Berrigan in Jennifer Willis (ed.), *A LIFE-TIME OF PEACE* (2003), p. 62.

### **Books Received**

David M. Gross (ed.), *WE WON'T PAY!* - A Tax Resistance Reader. This anthology begins with an entry about taxes in Judea and ends with a scholarly entry on "Death and Taxes." It is a compilation of English language pieces ranging from Jesus to Gandhi to Thoreau to modern-day resisters. A number of libertarian/voluntaryist entries are included. Self-published by the editor. Order from [wwwcreatespace.com/333658](http://wwwcreatespace.com/333658) or from [amazon.com](http://amazon.com). ISBN 1434898253.

Jorg Guido Hulsmann, *THE ETHICS OF MONEY PRODUCTION*. This book combines "the tradition of philosophical realism," the "Austrian theory of banking and fiat money," and the "scholastic tradition of St. Thomas Aquinas and Nicholas Oresme," in one unique treatise. It looks at the production of money by asking such questions as: Whose property is it? Who has agressed? and Who has been agressed against? For example, it breaks new ground by pointing out that "Inflation is that part of the money supply that comes into being because of the invasion of private property rights." [pp. 86, 88 and 100] Inflation is not simply an increase in the money supply, for every gold miner has the right to increase his supply of gold via his own hard work. The inflation that we hard money advocates deplore is the result

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## Declaration of Renunciation

*continued from page 1*

Its only authority comes through the barrel of a gun.

Is the arbitrary "legal" construct of the Corporate State more precious than life? Is this guns-and-steel lifeless structure more precious than living, breathing beings? This killing machine is fabricated of cunning deceitful words of legally piggily on corporate parchment. Are we living beings or abstract symbols to be manipulated by the Money Power? What is the "National Interest," other than the transfer of wealth and influence to the power elite? What about humanity's interest?

I write against the oblivion of humanity. I act in quest of goodness, beauty and truth, that we may yet live.

I am not Government property. I bid farewell to the United States Government and to the citizenship it has imposed upon me against my will. I love life too much to be forced to participate in its murder.

The United States government is a stain upon humanity. It is a grotesque distortion of human relations and the human conscience. It is ugly beyond the power of words to describe. Only its end product speaks clearly for what it is and what it does. "Shock and Awe" death raining from the sky. Children's blood flowing in the streets. Body parts strewn across wedding festival grounds. A human genome corrupted by depleted uranium and agent orange. Hiroshima. Los Alamos Lab. The science of death versus the art of life. Torture. Rape. Ecocide. Endless heinous crimes. The most terrible Merchant of Death in human history. Human species suicidal.

"The U.S. Government has a history of illegally attacking those who pose a serious threat to its authority, and getting away with it, because it controls the Courts, the Judges, and the Cops."

If you, people of the world, wish to support Government, then so be it. But leave me alone. As a peaceful individual I reject your authority imposed by violence. I reject all Government claims of legitimacy. You and your Government do not have the right to do the things that you do. Foremost among these tax-and-public debt financed activities are the waging of war; the conscription of soldiers; and the expenditure of citizens' wealth upon armaments which by now can destroy our earth many times over. I call for an end to these activities. I will not support such activities with my life, my money or my energy.

The laws of our natural world, the laws of the Great Spirit, the five precepts of the Buddha, are morally and practically superior to political laws. You must not kill and I must not kill. We must not support killing. We must love our neighbors as we love ourselves. As the Hopi have said, "From this one commandment,

to respect and revere life, come all the other commandments: to tell the truth; to share with others; to live together in mutual support; to take care of our children and old people, the sick and strangers, friends and enemies; to abstain from intoxicants and adultery; not to cheat, steal or covet."

It is up to the individual to discern his duty to his fellowmen and to act accordingly. No other can know my moral conscience, let alone "represent" it in decisions of war and peace. How can another "represent" me in voting to murder children? The first duty of love is to do no harm. Therefore my duty of love is to renounce the State, to withdraw from it, to quit it, to abandon it, to refuse to pay its taxes, to refuse participation in its charade of corporate money-controlled elections and to live my own life in search of truth and righteousness.

What do you do when you awaken to the awfulness of the lies of the State and the State of the lie? How does one negotiate with pathological liars? How does one come to peace with his tax payment hiring of cold-blooded murder for oil and money?

Against whom, then, shall I commit treason? The brotherhood of man? My rational mind and common sense? My moral conscience? Or the United States government? I prefer treason against the arbitrarily imposed rule of an organized crime syndicate to treason against humanity. To suffer in tax compliant silence the heinous crimes against humanity perpetrated by the United States would be to negate whatever is within me that can be called human.

The shredding of my government permission-to-exist documents is offered as a prayer that the government of the United States -- perceived to be a criminal organization of incomprehensible scope -- may be without bloodshed dissolved and abolished from this earth forever.

I no longer have a Government name; I have no country, no travel papers, no passport and no Government identification. Under the law of every Government, I am an illegal human being. Against this arbitrary "illegality" I claim my right to exist as a free and sovereign individual.

What man -- or group of men -- can declare another to be "illegal? Such men, who cannot give life, would yet take it as lying murderers in God's own temple. For Power, there is no tomorrow. There are no grandchildren. Of the good earth, there is none. There is only Power. Persons who aspire to this are degraded, deranged, diseased.

We are insane to submit to rule by the depraved.

What shall be done with me?

If deported to the United States, the Government will subject me to draconian penalties. Having destroyed my passport, having renounced my citizenship, having made

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this Declaration, I have become a seditious rebel to the United States Government. The United States will have no choice but to harass, persecute and, ultimately, jail me for speaking truth to power.

On the one hand, I have the natural wish to live, to grow, to move about, to be free, to act as a man. On the other hand, in order to live in this manner with the ordinary amenities of livelihood, I am forced by taxation to finance the murder of children who have a sacred right to life -- innocent small children who cannot conceive of the wish to harm me.

There comes a time when the abuses are so great, the mindless destruction so wanton, the suffering so stupidly unnecessary, that one must resist the Power of rulership with his life. I love Life too much to participate in its murder.

I bid you farewell, those who would remain in voluntary bondage. Go about your life peacefully, respecting yourself, all others and the earth upon which we live. Remember that means is to end as seed is to tree. A violent means can never produce a good end. The truth shall set us free. My efforts shall not have been in vain. Right always overcomes might, even though I may not live to see the day.

Whatever happens to me, may you remember my message: Awaken from your slumber. Realize that Government depends upon your consent. You control yourself. You can withdraw your consent.

We must recover Respect -- for life and for each other. Civilizations that get off the Path of Respect do not last, because when a people get off the path, they also remove themselves from the circle of life.

My prayer is to love and to serve. From my heart I seek to act in a good way, in a sacred way, for the benefit of many, in support of life, that the seventh generation of children may yet live and be happy.

The "why" of what I do is put completely to rest by the statement, "I love." The final answer to any question about my actions is "I love." What is the value of human life -- this is the real question.

*Executed at New Delhi this 19th day of June 2009,  
Jeff Knaebel* ☒

## **An Open Letter on Global Ethics**

*continued from page 8*

deeper into their own pockets to make up the difference?

Question 5: Is there any possible justification for stealing, killing, or treating citizens inhumanely who refuse to pay their tax?

Question 6: Does not the government's resort to violence in collecting taxes set a bad example, which some individuals in society might think is right to follow?

I have addressed these questions to family, friends, religious leaders, and have found that they generally

apply a double standard to the actions of government agents despite the fact that the "Four irrevocable directives" of the Global Ethic apply to everyone equally. As Richard Maybury, in his book, *WHATEVER HAPPENED TO JUSTICE?*, explains: "This is what is meant by those five words in the (United States) Declaration of Independence 'all men are created equal.' No one gets any special privileges or exemptions from (these directives)." [p. 22] As you wrote in *A GLOBAL ETHIC*, "No one," whether a citizen or government agent, "has the right" to "physically ... injure, much less kill, any other human being." [p. 25]

I wonder if you or one of your colleagues at the Global Ethic Foundation could discuss these questions relating to the conduct of government and its agents.

Sincerely,

Carl Watner

*[Editor's Note: Dr. Kung acknowledged receiving my letter, and replied that "I can tell you briefly that I do not see a contradiction between the Global Ethic and the government which collects taxes from its citizens."]* ☒

"Hierarchical institutions [coercive governments] are like giant bulldozers - obedient to the whim of any fool who takes the controls."

- Edward Abbey, *A VOICE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS* (1989), Chapter 3, p. 22.

## **Books Received**

*continued from page 5*

of the fraudulent and deceptive increase in the money supply via fractional reserve banking or the counterfeiting of real money. Published by the Ludwig von Mises Institute, Auburn, AL 36832. [www.mises.org](http://www.mises.org). ISBN-978-933550-09-1.

Antony Adolf, *PEACE: A WORLD HISTORY* (2009). Published by Polity Press, 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148, [www.polity.co.uk](http://www.polity.co.uk). ISBN-13;978-0-7456-4126-3 (pb). This book focuses on "the full spectrum of peace and peacemaking from prehistoric to contemporary times." It serves as an interesting companion to James Payne's *A HISTORY OF FORCE* (2004).

Paul Rosenburg, *PRODUCTION VERSUS PLUNDER: The Ancient War That Is Destroying The West* (2009). Available through [www.veraverba.com](http://www.veraverba.com). Written by a voluntaryist supporter, this book views western civilization through the lens of Franz Oppenheimer's observation that there are two ways of satisfying man's desires: "work and robbery, one's own labor and the forcible appropriation of the labor of others."

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## An Open Letter on Global Ethics

January 18, 2009

Doctor Hans Kung  
Global Ethic Foundation  
Waldhauser Strasse 23  
72076 Tubingen  
Germany  
(email: office@weltethos.org)

Dear Doctor Hans Kung:

Re: Hans Kung and Karl-Josef Kuschel (eds.),  
A GLOBAL ETHIC: The Declaration of the Parliament  
of the World's Religions, New York: Continuum, 1993.

I recently read your book and was glad to see its  
emphasis on non-violence, the Golden Rule, and the  
“fundamental demand [that] every human being must be  
treated humanely.” [p. 21] This includes the prohibitions  
that a person should not kill or steal. “Or in positive terms:  
Have respect for life!” [p. 25]

The purpose of this letter is to ask: How do you  
reconcile the directives of the Global Ethic with the  
institution of government, which relies on or resorts to  
force to collect its taxes?

As you realize all governments, whether democratic  
or totalitarian, collect at least part of their revenues  
coercively. Taxes are collected under the threat of the  
citizen going to jail, having his property confiscated, or

both, if he or she does not pay the government the  
amount it claims is owed.

I hope that we both would agree that a robber is  
violating the global ethic when he steals from or kills  
a person in order to take their property. The purpose  
for which he intends to use the stolen property in no way  
affects how we judge the violence. It matters not  
whether he intends to use the stolen property for  
charitable purposes or for his personal use. Killing  
and/or stealing are wrong.

Question 1: Are not the actions of agents of the  
government violent in the same manner as that of  
the robber?

Question 2: Is not the Golden Rule applicable to this  
situation? Would not the agents of government prefer not  
to be robbed or killed themselves?

Question 3: Are not the agents of the government  
acting violently when they threaten and/or coerce the  
reluctant citizen? Are they not acting inhumanely toward  
the citizens?

Question 4: Is there not a humane way to collect  
money for the government? Is it not possible to  
remonstrate peacefully with the refuseniks: to explain  
to them the importance of paying taxes? Is it not possible  
to cut off some or all government services to those who  
will not pay their taxes? And in the very worst case, that  
they still insist on not paying, is it not possible that those  
who do see the importance of funding governments, dig

*(continued on page 7)*

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