
The Voluntaryist

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

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The Noose Continues to Tighten But No Government Lasts Forever

By Carl Watner

Voluntaryists have a unique outlook on government. They view the State as an invasive institution. It imposes a coercive monopoly over defense services and collects its revenues via compulsory taxation. Theodore Lowi, a professor of political science at Cornell University in the early 1980s authored a book, *INCOMPLETE CONQUEST* (1981), in which he observed:

Every action and every agency of contemporary government must contribute to the fulfillment of its fundamental purpose, which is to maintain conquest. Conquest manifests itself in various forms of control, but in all those forms it is the common factor tying together in one system the behavior of courts and cops, sanitation workers and senators, bureaucrats and technocrats, generals and attorney generals, pressure groups and presidents. [p. 13]

Two of the most basic "forms of control" exercised by any government are that of demanding enrollment in its armed forces, and in collecting taxes based on one's income and/or accumulated wealth. Perhaps conscription is the State's most direct control over your life, but its ability to tax ultimately destroys the principle of private ownership. Everything you think you "own" is really held subject to its pleasure. It is as though you are a slave and your master allows you to retain certain perks.

In my article, "The Chickens Come Home to Roost - The Master Plan for 'Tightening the Noose'" (Issue 48, February 1991), I referred to the late Fred Rowe, who wrote an article for his House of Onyx publication entitled "The IRS Electronic Monster." Rowe set forth his predictions about the future state of economic freedoms in these United States. He described what he called an IRS "master plan" under which the United States government would push toward the creation of a cashless society. Electronic money would take the place of banknotes, and all financial transactions would be recorded via computers, which in turn would be connected to those of the IRS. The tax bureaucracy would then take this information and render every citizen and resident of the United States a tax return. Withholding on all income from your labor, and on all

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Am I An American Citizen and What Might It Mean?

By Carl Watner

This article was prompted by thoughts of a trip abroad and my perusal of the "Application For A U.S. Passport" (Department of State Form DS-11). On page one, the applicant is asked to "declare under penalty of perjury" that "I am a citizen ... of the United States ..."

Can I, as a voluntaryist, make that declaration? Can you?

First of all, what does it mean to be a citizen? What are the pros and cons of citizenship? Are they of any consequence?

The word 'citizen' is of Anglo-Norman and Old French origin and in the context of this article means "a member of the State." From the perspective of the United States government, every person born within the United States has these basic duties:

...To serve in the military, if drafted;

...To pay taxes on his or her worldwide income;

...To serve as a juror and appear as a witness when subpoenaed by a court;

...To obey all the laws promulgated by local, state, and federal governments.

In return, the United States government's primary duty towards its citizens is that of providing 'protection' from domestic criminals and foreign enemies. Federal, state, and local governments also provide courts, roads, postal delivery, social services, and numerous other entitlements to those living within its jurisdiction. (It generally does a poor job of providing 'services' and assumes no responsibility for its failures.)

The main problem with government, as voluntaryists see it, is that the State is a criminal organization. It claims sovereignty over a certain geographic area. Within this zone it wants everyone to become at least partially responsible for its crimes by making them citizens. It enforces a compulsory monopoly of defense (police, law and courts, and the armed forces), such that individual property owners may not decline its services, or employ another agency to provide the defense services they would prefer. To fund these monopolies, it collects compulsory

By institutionalizing their monopolistic controls over all geographic areas on this planet, governments have transformed the world into a vast prison system from which there is no escape.

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Some Gems from THE FREEMAN

No. 1 “How State-Help Destroys Self-Help”

History is full of examples of healthy national communities that gradually shriveled up, lost vitality, and perished as the people were bribed by the will-o'-the-wisp of state handouts and fell more and more into the meshes of an all-encompassing bureaucracy.

It is one of the best established laws of history that, as government activity expands, individual activity and enterprise contract, until what was once a vigorous, self-reliant society becomes a hollow, bureaucratized shell, easily cracked by external attack or internal decay. This whole drama of rise, growth, decay, and ultimate fall has been played on many stages in world history, the most dramatic being that of ancient Rome. . . .

Ever higher taxes, an ever-increasing bureaucracy, the growth of an omnipotent state, the paralysis of local initiative, a growing reliance on a faraway central authority that started with some features of the welfare state and ended with full-fledged totalitarianism—here are some very obvious forces making for the decline and fall of Rome. Does it require much exercise of the imagination to see in our own country and our own time some germs, at least, of these ultimately fatal diseases?

- William Henry Chamberlain in THE FREEMAN, May 1978, p. 275.

No. 2 “Education In A Free Society”

One only needs to return to the example of books and magazines to realize the alarming condition of public education. Who would not be shocked if a government authority decided to provide magazines and books, outlawed all other literature that did not meet government standards, and furthermore required persons to read them. What a blatant denial of individual liberty! Yet, this is exactly the case in public schooling, and it is a far cry from the education to be expected in a truly free society.

- Mark Spangler in THE FREEMAN, July 1977, p. 420.

No. 3 “The Will To Be Free”

[T]he existence of institutions to promote freedom will not necessarily guarantee the survival of freedom. ... Something else is ... needed. That something else is the

conviction of the citizenry that it will be free. ...

The institutions of a free society are, in reality, the results of the actions of free men who believe in the need of protecting their freedom. [The desire for f]reedom precedes freedom-supporting institutions.

- Joseph P. Howard, in THE FREEMAN, March 1979, pp. 172-173.

No. 4 “The First Step”

If means and ends are the same thing (as Emerson and I believe), and if all power of every kind tends to corrupt (as Acton and I are convinced), then the current efforts for peace and justice in the United States, and in the world in general, are not soundly based. Since these efforts mostly ignore the above postulates, they are no more likely to succeed today than they have succeeded in the past. ...

The first step toward peace is for each person to be peaceful. This is a decision that any person can make whenever he wants to. If all persons were peaceful, then peace would exist; and along with it, there would then also exist as much justice (an undefinable emotion) as we fallible human beings are capable of understanding. Since peace and justice must necessarily begin with a unilateral decision by one person alone, I have decided (without consulting anyone) to live as follows:

I will never use (or advocate the use of) force or violence or compulsion against any peaceful person. I won't even advocate the passing of a law that will force any peaceful person to follow my concepts of how people should live and act. ...

There's no organization to join, no armband to wear, no action programs of any kind. And the only immediate reward is the possibility of an internal peace that sometimes comes to a person when he stops using and advocating compulsion against any peaceful person, even for the latter's own good.

- Dean Russell, “Peace and Justice,” in THE FREEMAN, May 1974. ☑

Am I An American Citizen and What Might It Mean?

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levies known as taxation and operates a fiat money system (central bank with legal tender laws). In short, the State is an invasive institution because its existence rests on the initiation of coercion. According to the government, a person may not decline to fulfill his or her obligations to the State. You will be fined, arrested, and/or jailed, and probably held in “contempt” if government agents discover that you are not satisfactorily doing what you are supposed to do in fulfilling its mandates.

One of the ‘services’ provided by the American government is that of issuing passports and providing consular protection to those traveling outside the United

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What Is the Point of My Libertarian Anarchism?

By Robert Higgs

In college in the 1960s I was not a political person. Although I took a keen interest in politics, especially in the war that was raging in Vietnam, I concentrated on my studies, earning a living, and chasing women. After I began work as a professor, in 1968, I gravitated quickly from my collegiate New Leftism toward classical liberalism. As I learned more about Austrian economics, political economy, public choice, and history, I became increasingly libertarian (minarchist variety). My views continued to evolve, however, and by the time the 21st century arrived, if not sooner, I had finally reached my destination as a libertarian anarchist.

Although I make no apology whatever for this ideological identity, I do not share the seeming expectation of some of my fellow libertarian anarchists that a revolution is now, or soon will be, occurring in the direction of my preferred political ideals. Indeed, my expectation is, if anything, the reverse: it seems to me much more likely that the USA will continue to drift and lurch toward totalitarianism, though this system will surely have a unique red, white, and blue coloration to suit the American people's history, culture, and tastes. I do not expect a dictator with a funny little mustache and a horde of brown-shirted thugs to take power after smashing heads in the streets. I expect instead an elected dictator who looks like George W. Bush or Barack Obama and a horde of police dressed in riot-suppression gear to turn the trick, though most people will not need to have their heads smashed and will go along gladly.

If I comprehend the world in this way, what, some people wonder, am I doing by embracing libertarian anarchism? Well, I am obviously not taking this position in order to come out on the winning side. If that were my goal, I would already have found a way to make myself useful in the military-industrial-congressional complex. No, I have put myself where I am now somewhat as Martin Luther did when he announced: "Here I stand. I can do no other."

In my case, this declaration means most of all that I am simply doing what seems to me the decent thing; that taking any other ideological position would entangle me in evils of which I want no part. Although I sincerely believe that a stateless world would be better than the present world in countless ways, such as better health, greater wealth, and enhanced material well-

being, I am not a libertarian anarchist primarily on consequentialist grounds, but instead primarily because I believe it is wrong for anyone—including those designated the rulers and their functionaries—to engage in fraud, extortion, robbery, torture, and murder. I do not believe that I have a defensible right to engage in such acts; nor do I believe that I, or anyone else, may delegate to government officials a just right to do what it is wrong for me—or you or anyone—to do as a private person.

Still, one might ask, if I do not expect that my vision of a just world can ever be realized, why do I persist in evaluating the events of the nasty "real world" by the standards realizable only in my ideal world? The answer is that everyone must have an ideal; without one, there is no standard against which one may assess the imperfect actions and events of the actual world. Without a standard, one may only shrug his shoulders, like a character in an existentialist novel, in nonchalant indifference to the political wickedness raging on all sides. Just as a devout Christian seeks to live a Christ-like life, knowing full well that no one can live up to the standard set by Jesus, so I aim to live and to make my judgments of the events I hear about in the light of the nonaggression axiom. The initiation of violence or the threat of violence against innocent others is wrong, regardless of the noble ends that one might cite to justify such violence or threat. It is wrong for me, wrong for you, and wrong for the president of the USA and his flunkies.

Like the Christian who inevitably falls into sin, I may fall short of my ideal. I may act or speak inconsistently with it. Many public issues are complicated, and in regard to them I may fail to discern the best way to act in accordance with my ideological ideal. If you let me know about my inconsistency, I can attempt to set aside my pride, admit my error, and correct it. As new issues arise, the task of sorting out the best way to deal with the most pressing problems will present itself repeatedly. Perhaps, like St. Paul in his letters to the new churches of the ancient world, we can strive to instruct one another in the most defensible understanding and practice of libertarian anarchism. Merely shouting that the existing order is rotten, is on the verge of collapse and, once it has collapsed, will be replaced by libertarian anarchism, however, seems to me so hopelessly naïve that I am inclined to urge my ideological comrades who do such shouting to get a firmer grip on themselves. One needs to combine his moral uprightness with a solidly

founded understanding of the social, political, and economic world and how it works. Otherwise, our statements and actions become hopelessly quixotic.

I do not expect to live to see a world that even approximates my ideal. In fact, I greatly fear that I shall instead live long enough to see the most obscene species of police state in the saddle in the USA—after all, there is now only a short distance to go to reach this horrible destination, and many Americans seem eager to get to it as soon as possible. Nevertheless, I am comfortable with my ideological convictions. To have embraced anything else would have been a great mistake for me. I took almost a lifetime to reach my current position; I did not come to it lightly or without extended study and thought. Of course, I may still be wrong in every regard; I am a human being, and as such I am certainly subject to running off the moral and intellectual rails. I do not propose to be paralyzed by this universal human susceptibility to error, however. Feeling the need to take a stand of some kind as a participant in the events of my time and place, I have put myself firmly where I now stand. By the light I have been given to see the right, I can do no other.

[This originally appeared on www.badquaker.com/archives/1315.] 

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major financial transactions, such as the sale of real estate and investments, would enable the government to collect taxes on a mostly “pay-as-you-go” basis. Such computer transparency would also make it very difficult for tax resisters to escape the government’s clutching hand.

Whether or not such a conspiratorial master plan was ever hatched by government bureaucrats, the unceasing efforts of government to take control of its citizens’ property have continued unabated. Some of the steps in this never-ending battle for conquest and control have been:

...requirements that most people born in the United States have government-issued birth certificates;

...passage of the 16th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution authorizing Congress to tax income;

...requirements that a government social security number be used in conjunction with all large financial transactions and in filing tax returns;

...reporting all domestic cash transactions of \$ 3,000 or more to the U.S. Treasury;

...attempting to require that payments to individuals of \$ 600 or more be reported via 1099 Forms to the Internal Revenue Service;

...requirements to report to the U.S. Treasury; and/or U.S. Customs movements of more than \$ 10,000 cash and certain other negotiable instruments to and from the U.S.;

...requirement that applicants provide a social security number on passport applications, and upon refusal being fined \$ 500 by the Internal Revenue Service;

...requirements to report the existence of foreign-held bank accounts and foreign-held assets;

...requirement that anyone renouncing their U.S. citizenship for reasons of avoiding U.S. taxes be liable for U.S. taxes for the 10 years following their renunciation;

...requirement that all employers within the United States verify the eligibility of prospective hires, who, of course, must have a government social security number; [See “Countdown to Extinction,” THE VOLUNTARYIST No. 68, June 1994, page 3 for further information.]

Now the government is working out some new regulations that affect both our property and our bodies. The Obama care health care legislation mandates that most people in the United States purchase health insurance or pay a penalty. Its constitutionality has been argued before the Supreme Court. Increasingly, doctors are no longer able to abide by the Hippocratic Oath because third-party payers (mostly the government through Medicare and Medicaid, but also insurance companies) make health decisions for their patients. It is no longer between the doctor and patient to determine what is the best treatment. The decision is up to the party paying for that treatment. Furthermore, physicians have been ordered “to adopt electronic health records or face economic sanctions from Medicare.” The Federal Commission for the Coordination of Comparative Effectiveness Research will determine the “most-cost effective way of allocating a fixed amount of resources among” the U.S. population. [See “Notable & Quotable,” THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, March 17-18, 2012, p. A13.]

The government is also tightening the regulations surrounding the ownership of foreign bank accounts and the reporting of assets held abroad. For all practical purposes there has never been any financial or banking privacy in the United States. Currently the governments of the United States, France,

Germany, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom have joined together in cooperation to intensify their efforts to combat international tax evasion. On March 10, 2010, the United States enacted the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA). This legislation introduced reporting requirements for foreign financial institutions (FFIs). Many banks headquartered abroad are required to identify U.S. account holders, report certain information to the IRS about their accounts, and assess a 30% withholding tax on certain payments of U.S. source income to recalcitrant account holders or non-participating FFIs that are unwilling to provide the necessary information. In short, great pressure is being brought to bear on banks that are not subject to U.S. jurisdiction to subjugate them to IRS regulations. Some foreign banks, particularly those in Switzerland, have decided to terminate their account relationships with U.S. citizens so as to avoid these entanglements with U.S. law.

All this is reminiscent of what Nazi Germany did to its citizens in the years before World War II. Consider these National Socialist laws:

The decisive sign that the Nazis had turned their sights on the assets of Germans abroad was the law against economic sabotage enacted in December 1936. In part this was aimed at enticing Germans to repatriate their foreign nest-eggs: those prepared to admit they had assets abroad could keep a third of them after they handed over the remaining two-thirds to the Reichsbank, ... 'Any German national who knowingly and having as a motive acts against the law in transferring assets abroad or keeps them abroad and thereby damages the German economy is punished with death'. [Nicholas Faith, SAFETY IN NUMBERS: THE MYSTERIOUS WORLD OF SWISS BANKING, New York: The Viking Press, 1982, pp. 83-84]

[P]ursuant to the Decree on the Registration of the Property of the Jews of April 26, 1938, all Jews were required to value all their assets (foreign and domestic) and register them if their value was in excess of RM 5,000. ["Expropriation (Aryanization) of Jewish Property," General, www.edwardvictor.com/Holocaust/expropriation]

As reported in THE WALL STREET JOURNAL on April 6, 2012 [p. A9], "hiding money in [tax] havens isn't as easy as it used to be." The U.S. Congress has "passed laws imposing draconian penalties on people hiding foreign financial assets." How do the following U.S. government regulations compare to those of Nazi Germany?

A person who holds a foreign financial account may have a reporting obligation even though the account produces no taxable income. ... The FBAR (Report of Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts) is not filed with the filer's federal income tax return. [From IRS.gov: Report of Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts (FBAR) page on the internet]

The principal purpose for collecting the information [required by Department of the Treasury Form TD F 90-22.1 - "Report of Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts"] is to assure maintenance of reports where such reports or records have a high degree of usefulness in criminal, tax, or regulatory investigations or proceedings. ... Disclosure of this information is mandatory. Civil and criminal penalties, including in certain circumstances a fine of not more than \$500,000 and imprisonment of not more than five years, are provided for failure to file a report, supply information, and for filing a false or fraudulent report. Disclosure of the Social Security number is mandatory. [From TD F 90-22.1, 2nd paragraph of the "Privacy Act and Paperwork Reduction Act Note."]

The Internal Revenue Service also has other reporting requirements to be found in Part III (Foreign Accounts and Trusts) of Schedule B, Form 1040, as well as on Form 8938, Statement of Specified Foreign Financial Assets. A Bloomberg.com news report of August 3, 2011 demonstrates that the IRS means business. Robert E. Greely, who "pleaded guilty to filing a false U.S. tax return that concealed more than \$ 13 million in two Swiss" bank accounts, "agreed to pay a civil penalty of \$ 6.8 million for failing to file a Report of Foreign Bank and Financial Account form." ["Former UBS Client Greely Admits to Hiding More than \$ 13 Million From IRS" by David Voreacos; citing U.S. v. Greely, 11-cr-374, U.S. District Court, Northern District of California (San Francisco).]

Why exactly are such assets of concern to the federal government, and why is the "failure to report" foreign assets a crime if it is not illegal to own them? The answer is to be found in the invasive nature of government. Governments demand obedience to their rules and regulations, whatever they may be. Governments also have an insatiable appetite for tax revenues. And furthermore, many governments have a record of confiscating the known assets of their citizens. Although the United States government has never required surrender of assets held abroad, it did confiscate all gold coins and gold bullion in 1933,

and outlawed the ownership of gold by American citizens regardless of where it was located. But why would a citizen break the laws of the United States? An American might have several reasons. A person might be a conscientious objector against taxation. A citizen might think that foreign assets would be safe from seizure by the American government because they are outside its domestic jurisdiction. The citizen might also think that having assets abroad would provide a nest egg in case of the need to live abroad. Having foreign assets might provide a means to escape from government agents. During the Nazi era, how many German dissidents or German Jews would have been grateful to have had money outside of Germany, and how much easier would it have then been to leave Germany and escape the Gestapo?

There have been numerous books and articles comparing Nazi Germany and the United States of America. Leonard Peikoff's 1982 book, *THE OMINOUS PARALLELS*, was subtitled "the end of freedom in America." Naomi Wolf's more recent publication, *THE END OF AMERICA (2007)* highlighted "the ten key steps that would-be despots take" when they assume control of a country. These include many that have already occurred in the United States:

- ...invoking the threat of internal and/or external dangers;
- ...establishing secret prisons where torture takes place;
- ...building paramilitary forces;
- ...creating a surveillance apparatus aimed at ordinary citizens;
- ...infiltrating citizen groups and organizations in an effort to disrupt their activities;
- ...arbitrarily arresting and detaining citizens and aliens;
- ...targeting key individuals who criticize the government and destroying their reputations;
- ...censoring and restricting the press;
- ...disparaging criticism of the government as "espionage" and dissent as "treason;"
- ...subverting the rule of law by ignoring constitutional provisions and due process.

No one can foretell how far these trends will affect the future, but they seem to reflect Carroll Quigley's 1966 prediction: Man's "freedom and choice will be controlled within very narrow alternatives by the fact that he will be numbered from birth and followed, as a number, through his educational training, his required military or other public service, his tax contributions, his health and medical requirements, and his final retirement and death benefits." [p. 866] That is the tragic part of the prediction in his book's title, *TRAGEDY AND HOPE*.

The hopeful part is reflected in what we can

observe from history. No government lasts forever. The Nazi 1000 Year Reich was gone in less than two decades. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics lasted less than 100 years. In western Europe, after the Roman empire disappeared, Quigley observes that by 900 A.D. there was clearly a period "when there was no empire, no state, and no public authority. ... The state disappeared, yet society continued. ... It was discovered that man can live without a state; It was discovered that economic life, religious life, law, and private property can all exist and function effectively without a state." [p. 83] Every generation faces natural and political challenges. Despite the tightening of the political noose, our own times are not unique. Some problems are more daunting than others, but life goes on. As Robert LeFevre used to say, the free man will find a way to be free. ▮

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States. Voluntaryists also object to the whole concept of government passports. To wit -

- ...They are government documents.
- ...They are generally required to leave the country.
- ...They are generally required for re-entry to the United States.
- ...They allow the government to track where you have been.

...They are unnecessary. For much of American history (with the exceptions of the War Between the States, and the First and Second World Wars), no passport requirements existed. It was not until 1978 that it was made "illegal [for a U.S. citizen] to enter or depart the United States without" a passport. [Wikipedia, "United States passport"]

This is not to deny that there might be travel documents issued by private organizations in a free society. Some travelers may consider passports an essential part of life, but providing them need not be a government function. As I discussed in my article, "The Exit Option," passports at one time were issued by notaries, and even peddlers. Furthermore, there has never been a requirement to have a passport when traveling within the United States, for example, from the East coast to the West coast. And that being the case, why should there be such a requirement when leaving El Paso, Texas for Ciudad Juarez, Mexico or from Niagara Falls, New York to Niagara Falls, Ontario? (By extension, voluntaryist logic questions why there should be any political boundaries at all.)

The whole purpose of government passports is to help the government to exercise control over its citizens, whether within or without the United States (and to generate revenue for itself in doing so).

This leads to the next question: who might be citizens of the United States?

Since many people reading this article are native-born Americans, I will only discuss the concept of birthright citizenship. This refers to people who were born within the geographical confines of the United States, and harks back to the old English common law which held that “birth and [political] allegiance go together.” [Wikipedia, “Birthright citizenship in the United States” (sub-section: “English common law”)] Citizenship law can be very complicated, so for simplicity’s sake, I will confine the discussion of birthright citizenship to those born within the United States of parents, who themselves, were born in the United States.

Generally, according to government interpretation, a person born within the territory of the United States is a citizen of the United States, regardless of that person’s desire. You become a citizen at birth, not when you reach adulthood, at age 18 or 21. You do not consent to become a citizen. You do not have any choice in the matter. You are simply designated a citizen! And if you wish to divest yourself of that status, you must leave the country, and formally renounce your citizenship before an American consular official outside of the United States. (And if you do this for the reason of not wanting to pay taxes to the United States government, you are still obligated to pay those taxes for another ten years from the date of your renunciation.)

Jeff Knaebel, who immolated himself in India in 2011, discovered that he could not divest himself of his American nationality without assuming Indian citizenship, a fact that disconcerted him greatly. All political governments and international law discourage statelessness, which is what one becomes when one renounces one’s birthright citizenship and refuses to assume citizenship of another country. But the fact is that all people are born stateless. They certainly have not consented to become a member of any government merely by being born. If a government can unilaterally impose citizenship, then it has already assumed arbitrary jurisdiction over bodies. Perhaps that is why the Jewish zealots said that taxation (a consequence of citizenship) was no better than an introduction to slavery. If the government can assert its control over you due to the fact that you were born in an area it claims to control, then it is simply a matter of grace - on its part - as to what it allows you to do, to earn, and to keep from your efforts.

In truth and good conscience, and as a voluntaryist, I cannot affirm that I am a citizen of the United States. Why so? I don’t want to give my sanction to the United States government. I do not wish to support it financially. I do not wish to participate in political elections. I object to the forced collection of taxes because taxes are a euphemism for stealing. I do not want to be responsible for any of the actions of the United States government. Is there not a link between the crimes of the United States government and the citizens who compose it, those who pay their taxes, those who vote in elections, and serve in its armed forces? This is not to say, however, that I do not want to be a vibrant participant in the voluntary sector of

the community within which I live. Communities have always existed before governments, and there are many peaceful ways of providing for the demands of society in the absence of the State (private business activity, cooperative societies, religiously supported institutions, and philanthropic efforts, to name just a few).

So what does it mean to be an American citizen? Is an American citizen a slave of his government? A slave is a person who is “the property of another,” a person who is “bound to absolute obedience.” The status of a slave is not a matter of choice. A slave has the major decisions of his or her life made by his or her owner. Must a citizen fight in wars declared by the American government? Must a citizen risk his or her life to defend it? Must a citizen kill those whom the government labels “enemies”? Must a citizen support the American government by paying its tax bill(s)? Is there any limit to the amount it may demand? Must a citizen be forced against his or her will to serve as a juror or as a witness in criminal or civil legal proceedings? And finally, must a citizen obey the government’s laws, many of which are inane, insane, or simply against his or her conscience? The government’s answers to these questions

Citizenship is defined by governments. The concept would not exist if there were no governments.

- Gulin de Vencentiis

are obviously “Yes,” though a person may choose to say “No,” and refuse to follow its orders. Ultimately, if enough of us speak out and say “No,” the government will lose its legitimacy.

The American government can call me anything it wants, but that does not make it so. It can label me an American citizen, but it forgets that I have a say in the matter. In my own mind and in my own person I refuse to be subservient and accept its jurisdiction over me. That is why I am not an American citizen.

Articles of Further Interest

“If This Be Treason, Make the Most of It!” The Voluntaryist, Issue 30, February 1988.

“The Exit Option,” The Voluntaryist, Issue 37, April 1989.

“Conflicts of Allegiance,” The Voluntaryist, Issue 37, April 1989.

“Man Without a Country,” The Voluntaryist, Issue 49, April 1991.

“Citizenship Papers,” by Clark Hanjian, The Voluntaryist, Issue 49, April 1991.

“Patriotism or Voluntaryism? – ‘Anywhere So Long As There Be Freedom,’” The Voluntaryist, Issue 66, February 1994.

“Why I Refuse to Be Numbered,” The Voluntaryist, Issue 116, 1st Quarter 2003.

“The Territorial Imperative: Rationale for Conquest,” The Voluntaryist, Issue 133, 2nd Quarter 2007.

“Slavery and National ID” in NATIONAL IDENTIFICATION SYSTEMS (2004). ▣

Who Owns The Job?

By Cecil Grove

That question has generated all manner of controversy and friction over the years.

Labor bosses, presuming to speak for all union members, maintain that jobs are owned by the workers. Although the claim is seldom made in such plain terms, when unions go out on strike, making use of threat and violence to prevent anyone else from doing the jobs they have just refused to perform, it is evident that both union leaders and members consider jobs to be the property of the unions.

Management, on the other hand, tends to argue just the reverse. Pointing out that it is the company or corporation which does the employing and furnishes the necessary capital involved, management contends that the job belongs to the company or corporation.

Government, of course, goes them all one better. Regulating both employees and employers and taking its "cut" off the top in taxes, government acts on the assumption that it owns, not only the job, but the human beings involved, as well.

What is the truth of the matter? Who, indeed, does own the job?

Well, as usual, when you ask the wrong question, you are likely to get the wrong answer. In truth, no one owns a job. A job is something to be done, not something to be owned. A job is not property. And only property can be owned. And that, we believe, puts the entire question

into its proper perspective.

We can now ask, not who owns the job, but who owns the property involved and who should control it?


The employee, as the owner of his own body, life and energy, is the only proper authority to decide how his property should be used.

Likewise with the employer. As the owner of the property his capital has bought and paid for (buildings, tools, equipment, etc.), he is the only proper authority to decide how his property should be used.

Getting the job done involves a coming together of the two and the use of the property involved on a basis mutually acceptable to the owners concerned.

And how is this accomplished? The process occurs in the market place based on the principle of voluntary exchange - a place where, and a process in which, *owners* come together and peacefully decide to exchange what is theirs.

Who, then, should do the job? The answer comes fast and clear: the owner who can, and will, do it to the satisfaction of the owner with whom he makes the voluntary exchange; both of whom, in a free market, would be free to seek other owners who might do it better.

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