
The Voluntaryist

Digital Issue 191 *"If one takes care of the means, the end will take care of itself."*

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"I Refused to Lie"

By Carl Watner

You are probably asking, *"Who refused to lie?"* Thirty some years ago I wrote and published a book review about this person who has been described in Wikipedia as follows:

The information we have ... suggests that he is the sort of person who might be embarrassing to the authorities of any country because he seems unwilling to compromise for convenience and personal comfort, and believes in saying what he thinks in situations which he clearly knows could endanger him. [1]

Any guess as to who that might be? In his latest book, this same person highlighted text from a well-known post-World War II movie. Guess that movie from the following paragraph:

The real complaining party at the bar of this courtroom is civilization. But the tribunal does say that the men at the dock are responsible for their actions. The principle of criminal law in every civilized society has this in common: any person who sways another to commit murder, any person who furnishes the lethal weapon for the purpose of the crime, any person who is an accessory to the crime is guilty. [2]

Who is the person, what is the name of the movie, and what is the connection between them?

The person is Vladimir Bukovsky (1942-2019), one of the best-known critics of the Soviet regime; the movie is JUDGMENT AT NUREMBERG (1961), a well-known courtroom drama depicting the trial of Nazi judges after World War II; and the connecting link is Bukovsky's new book, JUDGMENT IN MOSCOW: SOVIET CRIMES AND WESTERN COMPLICITY (2019).

Violence is not a sign of strength but of weakness. Whoever fails to win over hearts and minds tries to conquer with violence. Every show of force is proof of moral inferiority. ... An idea that needs weapons to survive will die on its own. An idea that can only maintain itself through violence is distorted. A living idea conquers by itself. Millions follow it spontaneously.

- Fr. Jerzy Popieluszko, Mass for the Country [of Poland], December 26, 1982, in Judith Kelly, JUST CALL ME JERZY (2016), p. 55.

When the Soviet Union fell apart in 1991, Bukovsky called for a Nuremberg-style trial to investigate all of the

crimes of the Communist Party and its functionaries. A trial of sorts was held in Moscow. It found a few high-level bureaucrats guilty of unconstitutional and illegal actions, but none of them were convicted as criminals. The Communist Party was not branded as a criminal organization, nor was membership in it deemed criminal, like the Nazi Party and its membership had been at Nuremberg. As Bukovsky writes, "My idea of a Moscow Tribunal died still born. Nobody in our immense country was moved by a sense of duty – to history, to truth, to the memory of the Communist regime's victims." [3] While in Moscow as an expert witness for the trial, he was able to surreptitiously scan thousands of pages of top-secret documents from the Communist Party archives, which then enabled him to prove his assertions that "the outside world never fully understood the Soviet system." [4] After reviewing the documents, even he "was amazed by the scope of the Communist Party's murderous activity across five continents." [5]

Bukovsky's life as a dissenter began when he was a college student at Moscow University. He helped organize some anti-communist poetry readings and wrote a biting critique of the Komsomol, the Leninist Young Communist League. In 1963, he landed in prison as a result of his activities, and in 1966 he was incarcerated in a psychiatric hospital and labeled as schizophrenic. Altogether he spent 12 years in psychiatric hospitals, prisons, or labor camps. [6] He was finally deported from the Soviet Union in December 1976, and exchanged for the general secretary of the Communist Party of Chile. He took up residence in England, gained a master's degree in biology from Cambridge University, and continued his activities highlighting the crimes of the Soviets. He wrote TO BUILD A CASTLE: MY LIFE AS A DISSENTER in 1978, and TO CHOOSE FREEDOM in 1981.

He was one of the first to accuse the Soviets of engaging in psychiatric repression of dissidents. In 1974, Bukovsky and Semyon Gluzman released their GUIDE TO PSYCHIATRY FOR DISSIDENTS. Bukovsky was diagnosed with the "slow onset of schizophrenia," and later charged with "active participation in collective actions that disturb the public order." [7] The regime was able to continue with their imprisonment of dissidents under the guise of mental illness until Bukovsky and others in the outside world brought public pressure to bear against the World Psychiatric Association which finally condemned the Soviets in 1977. [8]

According to Bukovsky there were some six thousand people in the post-Stalin era that the Soviets

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Editor: Carl Watner

Webmaster since 2011: Dave Scotese

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Potpourri from the Editor's Desk

No. 1 "The Man Who Knows Freedom Will Find a Way to Be Free"

But though our attachments can be taken from us by force, our free will cannot. ... Because (these) attachments increase the likelihood that we will cooperate with those who would control us, it should be evident that only our attachments can enslave us. We are only free when we are complete within ourselves. Only when we value something outside ourselves more than we value the inviolability of our will do we make ourselves vulnerable to the loss of our freedom. Because we cannot lose our free will but can only choose to relinquish it, we have nothing to fear from others. The realization of that fact is freedom. ...

Neither you nor I will recover our freedom through petitions, elections, or legislation: We will become free not when our neighbors understand what it means to be free, but when you and I do. We will not become free when the State goes away; rather, the State will go away when we become free. We have no saviors - be they religious, political, ideological, or technological - to whom we can turn for salvation: the passion to live as free men and women will either arise with us, or we shall not experience it at all. Since freedom is a condition natural to us as human beings, we need do no more to reclaim it than to resolve to exercise full control over our individual selves. ...

In the words of a sign that hung above the road at a school in Colorado ... 'the man who knows what freedom means will find a way to be free.' Our freedom will not be attained by political revolutions, but only by a spiritual revolution within each of us.

- Butler Shaffer, *CALCULATED CHAOS* (1985), pp. 223-224.

No. 2 "Dave Ramsey on Nonprofits"

God did not anoint nonprofits; the IRS did. Prior to the tax code being put in place in the last century, there was no such thing as a nonprofit organization.

Sure, there were churches and charities, but the word *nonprofit* didn't really exist. This is an IRS designation, not a biblical designation.

- Dave Ramsey, *THE LEGACY JOURNAL* (2014), p. 147.

No. 3 "Guess Whose Family?"

"A well-to-do family earns \$ 330,000 a year - yet spends \$ 410,000 a year. This family put a staggering \$ 78,000 on its credit card last year (2018), even though it already had \$ 2,150,000 in credit card debt. It pays \$ 37,000 a year in interest, and it no longer pretends to have a plan to pay off its debts." Add seven zeros to these figures and you have a close picture of the United States government with \$ 21.5 trillion in debt.

- suggested by Andrew Miller, "When Will the Dollar Collapse?" *THE PHILADELPHIA TRUMPET* (May-June 2019), p. 15.

No. 4 "All the Relevant Alternatives"

There are only two relevant ideal types of social patterns: the pattern of voluntary contractual interrelation, and that of hegemonic, coercive interaction. A can interact with B, in other words, in either of two ways: by free gift or exchange - voluntarily - or by coercion. And these are *all* the relevant alternatives. Now, if a society is voluntarist and contractual, this freedom will develop the personality of each and permit that great growth of living standards that makes modern civilization possible, that raises us up from the caveman. If the society is markedly coercive, not only will it stunt each individual's development, it will plunge human-kind back to primitive living standards and not permit any maintenance of civilization.

- Murray Rothbard in David Gordon (ed.), *STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL* (2010), p. 46.

No. 5 "What Is a Tax?"

A tax is the coercive expropriation of the property of an individual by the rulers of the State. The rulers use this property for whatever purposes they desire - usually the rulers will distribute it in such a manner as to ensure their continuance in office, i.e., by subsidizing favored groups. In addition, the rulers decide which individuals will pay the taxes - the decision consisting of expropriating the property of groups disliked by the rulers. A *price*, therefore, is a free act of voluntary exchange between two individuals, both of whom benefit by the exchange (else the exchange would not be made!). A *tax* is a compulsory act of expropriation, with no benefit accruing to the individual (unless he happens to be on the receiving end of property expropriated by the State from someone else).

- Murray Rothbard in David Gordon (ed.), *STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL* (2010), p. 226.

The Fate of America's First Parkway and Other Land Grabs

By Carl Watner

Until the early 1900s, all roads in the United States were built for foot or horse-drawn conveyances, and most were owned by local or state governments. The first exclusive-use highway or parkway (a road designed specifically for the automobile) was the brainchild of William Kissam Vanderbilt, Jr., (1878-1944). Sometimes referred to as William K. Vanderbilt II, he was the great grandson of the Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt of New York Central Railroad fame. His toll road was privately financed, received no government funding, and was known as the Long Island Motor Parkway, the Vanderbilt Parkway, or the Motor Parkway. It officially opened on October 10, 1908, and was designed with bridges and overpasses to remove intersections. The Parkway “was the first limited-access roadway in the world.” (Wikipedia)

At the turn of the century, Vanderbilt became interested in racing automobiles. Desirous of encouraging American automobile manufacturers, he sponsored the first Vanderbilt Cup race which took place in Nassau County on Long Island, New York on October 8, 1904. This first race featured seventeen vehicles and during its first three years was won by foreign entrants. During the 1906 race, crowds became difficult to control, and one spectator was killed, and four others were injured when struck by one of the racing cars. This served to spur Vanderbilt to form a company, called Long Island Motor Parkway, Inc., which was to build a road to be used “not only for racing, but during the rest of the year, for genuine pleasure driving.” (Miller, 152)

The most successful tyranny is not the one that uses force to assure uniformity but the one that removes the awareness of other possibilities, that makes it seem inconceivable that other ways are viable, ...

- Allan Bloom, THE CLOSING OF THE AMERICAN MIND (1987), p. 249.

The term 'parkway' was already in use, but generally meant a tree-lined boulevard or road leading to a park. Vanderbilt was determined to have his road constructed as “driveable, hard-surfaced highway absolutely free of grade crossing or interference from anything else, be it trains, horses, or wagons, and would be completely separate from all local roads.” (Miller, 152) Construction began in June 1908, but in a much different way than modern road-building. There was no mechanized equipment, like motor graders or bulldozers: all work was performed by men and horses using levers, pulleys, ropes, chains, and blasting powder where necessary. The road bed was leveled, filled with crushed stone, reinforced with two layers of wire mesh, and then received a layer of hand-mixed cement. Most of the sixty-five bridges were made of reinforced concrete

formed over steel I-beams or railroad type plate-girders. Vanderbilt was a naturalist so the Parkway had a low profile and blended in with the natural terrain.

Vanderbilt hoped that the road would eventually pay for itself through tolls, racing fees, and use as a test track for manufacturers of automobiles and accessories, whose factories were then on the East coast. Unfortunately, this did not work out: manufacturers moved West, tolls were considered too expensive, and in 1910, after four spectators were killed, and more than twenty injured, entrants refused to race on a course where barricades could not control the crowds. When all was said and done, the Parkway “reached a final cost of \$ 10 million, [and] never showed a profit.” (Miller, 156)

The original prospectus and promotional materials for the Parkway showed a straight route. As one historian put it,

the Parkway never achieved such perfection.

... Vanderbilt could not condemn land for his individual wishes. He had to buy entire farms in many instances, just to get a 100-foot right-of-way. If someone did not agree to sell, Vanderbilt sought someone who would agree; as a result, the road followed what can charitably be called a circuitous route. (Miller, 152-153)

By 1929, Vanderbilt realized that even after modernization, widening the roadbed, and a two and one-half mile extension, that the Parkway would never pay for itself. By that time, Robert Moses (1888-1981) had become President of the Long Island State Park Commission, and Vanderbilt approached him about buying the Parkway, part of which could be used for the new Northern State Parkway being built by the State. The remainder could be used for parks, playgrounds, and walking and bike paths. Moses only wanted two separate pieces of the Vanderbilt roadway, but of what use would the remainder be to Vanderbilt?

Moses, being Moses, told Vanderbilt to take his [Moses'] offer or that he [Vanderbilt] would find the Northern State Parkway paralleling his road entrance for entrance, and that Vanderbilt would end up giving it to Moses and the State for nothing. Vanderbilt left Moses' office and kept the Parkway operating for nine more years, closing it on April 16, 1938. He then deeded the roadway to the counties through which it ran for the \$ 90,000 he owed in back taxes. Moses was correct – they got the Parkway for nothing. ... (Miller, 157-158)

As this quote intimates, Robert Moses “was one of the most polarizing figures in the history of urban development in the United States.” (Wikipedia) Moses was known as the “power broker” of New York City, even though he never held an elected office. Nevertheless, he had sufficient political clout to deal with the likes of the wealthy Vanderbilt and others as he began planning roads for the New York environs. A few excerpts from Robert Caro's book THE POWER

BROKER will serve to illustrate.

[Moses] joked and laughed with farmers, but when one made it clear that he would not sell his land, Moses could change in an instant to quite a different approach. [The son of] P. G. Rasweiler ... remembers well the day the “parkway business” started. “Moses came one day. He introduced himself ... “as representing the State of New York. We’re going to put a parkway through this section of Long Island.” He was very polite at first, but when he saw my father was not going to sell he stood up in our kitchen and he said, “You know, Mr. Rasweiler, the state is all-supreme when it comes to a condemnation proceeding. If we want your land, we can take it.”

The next day as Rasweiler and his sons were in the field, an engineer and surveying crew showed up. “They just walked onto the property and set up their things without asking permission. Father asked them if they had papers from a court, and they said they didn’t.” According to his son, Rasweiler walked into his house, came out with a shotgun, and put it against the engineer’s chest, and said, “I’ll blow you to hell if you don’t get off my land.” The engineer left, telephoned Moses, who said, “Get the state troopers and go back there.”

Moses wanted to scare him, but when the engineer returned with the state troopers, Rasweiler asked the troopers if the surveyors could go on his land without papers. When the troopers told him that the engineer and crew couldn’t, they all left. “We thought we had won, but the next day they set their instruments up on a neighbor’s land and surveyed what they needed.” (Caro, 183 with paraphrasing)

Moses had the Rasweiler property formally condemned. He had originally offered \$ 1200 an acre for it. The Court of Claims awarded \$ 2700 an acre, but the Rasweiler farm was cut in half and could no longer be profitably worked as a farm. When Rasweiler had offered Moses property on the boundary of his farm (which he told Moses he would give the State for nothing), Moses’ attitude was “This is where we’re going [through the middle of your farm] and that’s it.” (Caro, 183)

One other example will suffice, though there are others documented in the Caro book.

Moses’ charm could vanish as quickly with a [wealthy] financier as with a farmer. When planning a public park near East Islip, Moses told W. Kingsland Macy (a well-known stockbroker, banker and publisher), that “they were going to take that place away from us [the owners] and nothing we could do would stop it. ... Mr. Moses informed me that he had the arbitrary power to seize this property, which was owned by myself and my associates, even though the state did not

have one cent to pay for it. ... Mr. Moses told me that he could take my home away from me. He told me personally that his power was such that he could seize my house, put me out of it and arrest me for trespass if I tried to get into it again. ... Mr. Moses told me not only that he possessed this arbitrary power, but that he was able to control the press of New York City, so as to hold me up to such obloquy that I would not be able to stand it.” And Moses was as good as his word. Moses directed Park Commission attorneys to draw up a Notice of Entry and Appropriation and serve it on Macy and his two co-owners – and while it was being served he stationed armed state troopers on the property and instructed them not to allow the three men to enter it even to remove personal property they had left there. (Caro, 184)

Years before this occurred, the magazine AUTO-MOBILE in its October 1908 issue editorialized that Vanderbilt’s privately-built Long Island Motorway will provide “an uninterrupted route across the Island which, owing to its proximity to the metropolis, is destined to be the home of millions with business and social interests in New York City.” It prophetically added “Someday the state will supply such motorways.” (Miller 158) If only the editorial writers had realized what violation of property rights they were endorsing!

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“Long Island Motor Parkway,” Wikipedia.

Robert Miller, “The Long Island Motor Parkway: Prelude to Robert Moses,” in Joann P. Krieg, editor, *ROBERT MOSES SINGLE-MINDED GENIUS*, Interlaken: Heart of the Lakes Publishing, 1989, pp. 151-158.

“Vanderbilt Cup,” Wikipedia. ▼

I Refused to Lie

(Continued from page 1)

“failed to break.” [9] These included not only the dissidents (citizens who criticized the practices or the authority of the Communist Party), but refuseniks (mostly Soviet Jews who were denied exit visas), and other true believers, such as the Russian Orthodox faithful. Where did the opponents of the communist system come from? The Soviets had only two possible answers: either subversive ideas must have been imported from abroad by the imperialists, or else the opponents of the regime were mentally ill. Soviet doctors defined “dissent as being a manifestation of pathological processes in the psyche.” [10] Of course, these were not the answers. Those who could not be broken had conscience enough to recognize that the communist system was inherently inhumane, resting on a blend of ideology and coercion.

Bukovsky’s stances against the Soviet government

have much to recommend him to a voluntaryist audience. He remained an advocate of non-violence for all his adult life. However, he did consider running for Mayor of Moscow in 1992, and for President of Russia in 1996. Nor did he ever mention the debate over whether socialist planners could calculate economically, started by von Mises in the 1920s. Mises believed that socialism must crumble from within because of its inability to generate market prices. However, before he died Bukovsky came to the realization that either the Party must manage the economy or else the market does. "There is no possible third way," as he put it. He also observed that Russia is a fabulously rich country, and that, even after nearly a century of communist rule, it is still immensely wealthy with oil, gas, coal, ores, gold, diamonds, timber, etc. "The laziest ruler could have ruled over it without a care in the world and with no crises." Bukovsky argued that Russia required the communist "idea" to bring about its economic collapse. [11]

One wonders whether Bukovsky would have agreed with Robert Nisbet's observation that: "With all due respect to differences among types of government, there is not, in strict theory, any difference between the powers available to the democratic and to the totalitarian state." [12] However, Bukovsky was certainly aware of how much every political system depends on legitimacy. As he wrote in TO BUILD A CASTLE:

... It was not atom bombs that created power, nor upon them that power rested. Power depended upon public obedience, upon a willingness to submit... [C]itizens ... fed up with terror and coercion should simply refuse to acknowledge them. The point about dealing with the Communists is that to acknowledge the reality of life they have created and to assent to their notions means *ipso facto* to become bandits, informers, hangmen, or silent accomplices. Power rests on nothing other than people's consent to submit, and each person who refuses to submit to tyranny reduces it by one two-hundred-and-fifty-millionth, whereas each who compromises only increases it. [13]

Bukovsky clearly saw the Soviet system as an evil, but he focused on his personal responsibility. Critics of Bukovsky and the dissidents said there were never enough of them to influence the regime or the outside world. But Bukovsky said, "that didn't matter. If even one of our critics had joined us, that would have been one more. The issue was not one of numbers or even practical results, but [rather] the principle of inner freedom and [the] moral responsibility of man." [14] His call to action was simple: "I refused to lie." [15] "Do what you can to preserve your own self-respect." [16] To him, silence in the face of crimes was a form of collaboration with the criminals. [17] He not only called attention to the crimes and treacheries of the Communist Party, but he inspired others with his integrity. As he

wrote in 2014, the Soviet dissidents were not a political movement, "We were a moral movement. Our basic impulse was not to transform Russia, but simply not to be a participant in crime." [18] "Our movement ... was not in fact political – it was *moral*. Our main stimulus was ... a refusal of complicity in its crimes." [19] But how did such crimes happen?

[T]he inevitable conclusion was that part of the blame lay on everyone, for practically everybody, voluntarily or involuntarily, passively or actively, was an *accomplice*. Not only those who tortured and executed but all those who raised their hands at meetings and 'unanimously approved' the massacres, not only those who issued orders, but those who remained obediently silent. ... Like our German contemporaries we had to remember that neither the opinion of the surrounding majority, nor orders from superiors, nor even the threat to one's life relieved us of the responsibility for our choice. ... It was better not to think of what it [a maximum term in prison] would mean for you personally. ... You just had to do as much as you could to serve your sentence with a clear conscience. With time this is how victory came to be seen – as the right to tell your descendants, *I did everything I could*. [20]

To remain [a] spiritually free [people], [we] must live in truth. Living in truth means bearing public witness to the truth at all times and in all situations. The truth is unchanging. It cannot be destroyed by this or that decision or this or that law. The source of our captivity is that we allow lies to reign, that we do not denounce them, that we do not protest against their existence every day of our lives, that we do not confront lies with the truth but keep silent or pretend that we believe the lies. We live then in a state of hypocrisy. Courageous witness to the truth is the path that leads directly to freedom.[One] who bears witness to truth can be free, even though in a[n] [internment] camp or a prison. ... [E]xternal or political freedom would come sooner or later as a consequence of freedom of spirit and fidelity to the truth.

- Fr. Jerzy Popieluszko, Homily of October 31, 1982, in Judith Kelly, JUST CALL ME JERZY (2016), pp. 79-80.

How do Bukovsky's ideas apply to us in the United States as the third decade of the 21st Century begins? Certainly voluntaryists must continually point out that taxation is theft. We must attack the coercive monopolization of public services, the violations of property rights that take place all around us. Voluntaryists must be heard and must not close their eyes. They must refuse to lie. A fraud is a fraud; a crime is a crime even if committed by government agents. This might be costly, as the dissidents found out, but every

person with a well-formed conscience must be prepared to not only exercise it, but suffer the consequences if necessary.

Could those of voluntaryist-persuasion ever be labeled mentally ill? In this era of political-correctness I certainly think so. As John Hasnas explains in "The Myth of Law and Order," "most people ... cannot even conceive of the idea of legal services apart from the government. The very notion of a free market in" all sectors of the economy, including police, law and courts, is so strange and bizarre as to be unthinkable. "The identification of order with law eliminates from public consciousness the very concept of decentralized provision of order. With regard to legal services, it renders the classical liberal idea of a market-generated, spontaneous order incomprehensible." This example of Orwellian newspeak is "the process by which words are redefined to render certain thoughts unthinkable." [21] If you have those "unthinkable thoughts" in your head, then there must be something wrong with you according to the critics.

This scenario has already begun to happen in the world in which we live. It is up to voluntaryists and other independent thinkers to be able to tell their descendants *I did everything I could* to prevent a 1984-style Orwellian world from descending upon us. [22]

End Notes

[1] "Post-Soviet Union Activities," in "Vladimir Bukovsky," at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vladimir_Bukovsky

[2] Vladimir Bukovsky, JUDGMENT IN MOSCOW (n.p.: Ninth of November Press, 2019), p. 57.

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[4] Edward Lucas, "Introduction" in Bukovsky, JUDGMENT, op. cit., p. xi.

[5] Bukovsky, JUDGMENT, op. cit., p. 37.

[6] Paul Boutin, "A Dissident's Legacy," November 15, 2019 at https://www.realclearbooks.com/articles/2019/11/15/a_dissidents_legacy_78395.html.

[7] "From the Gulag to Brexit," at <https://meduza.io/en/slides/from-the-gulag-to-brexite>, October 29, 2019.

[8] "The Campaign Against the Abuse of Psychiatry," in "Vladimir Bukovsky," op. cit.

[9] Bukovsky, JUDGMENT, op. cit., p. 124.

[10] Vladimir Bukovsky, "Punitive Psychiatry (1977)," in the Bukovsky Archives, "Communism on Trial," at <https://bukovsky-archive.com/2018/04/20/punitive-psychiatry-1977/>.

[11] Bukovsky, JUDGMENT, pp. 483-484.

[12] Robert Nisbet, "The State," in D.J. Enright (ed.), FAIR OF SPEECH (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 186.

[13] Vladimir Bukovsky, TO BUILD A CASTLE (New York: The Viking Press, 1977), pp. 33 and 240.

[14] Bukovsky, JUDGMENT, op. cit. p. 120.

[15] *ibid.*, p. 277.

[16] Boutin, op. cit.

[17] Vladimir Bukovsky, TO CHOOSE FREEDOM (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1987), p. 87.

[18] Boutin, op. cit.

[19] Bukovsky, JUDGMENT, op. cit., p. 141.

[20] *ibid.*, pp. 141-142.

[21] John Hasnas, "The Myth of Law and Order, Whole Number 123, THE VOLUNTARYIST, 4th Quarter 2004, p. 8, reprinted from "The Myth of the Rule of Law," 1995 WISCONSIN LAW REVIEW pp. 199-233 at Section XII. (Reprinted in Whole Number 98, THE VOLUNTARYIST [June 1999] p. 3.) Also see Bukovsky's comments in JUDGMENT, op. cit. p. 202: "The [communist] ideology spurned everything that was common to mankind, including the meaning of words ..."

[22] Bukovsky, JUDGMENT, p. 142. ☑

Informed Choice

By Sam Aurelius Milam III

All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside.

- from the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (emphasis added)

Being born is an event over which a person doesn't have any control, and to which he didn't give prior informed consent. Furthermore, it happens while he's a minor, and not of legal age. Consequently, a person doesn't acquire any obligation to be a citizen, or any other legal or contractual obligation, merely as a consequence of being born.

A jurisdiction over a person enables the exercise of power and control over that person. Such a jurisdiction is legitimate only if the person was competent and fully informed when he submitted to it, and only if he submitted to it voluntarily. Otherwise, a jurisdiction over a person is a form of extortion or slavery.

I was born in Lake Charles, Louisiana, in 1946. While I was growing up, I was required, against my will, to attend the government schools. In those schools, I was exposed to a lot of brainwashing. Among other things, I was told that I was a citizen. The idea was treated as axiomatic, and never questioned. Nobody ever hinted that I might have a choice in the matter. Nobody ever suggested that I might not want to be a citizen. In addition, even though I was a minor and not of legal age, I was required to recite, with my hand raised and before a teacher, who was a licensed agent of the state, the Pledge of Allegiance, a formal binding oath of allegiance to both the United States and its flag. It was an unforgivable usurpation of my unencumbered status.

Associated with the brainwashing about citizenship was a concurrent failure to disclose the specific conditions, consequences, and obligations of citizenship.

I was merely informed that I had obligations to society and to obey the "law". None of it was explained to me in any meaningful way. I didn't begin to understand any of it until later when, as an adult, I began to study on my own and think for myself.

After that, I decided that citizenship was a bad deal. For example, I learned that, as a citizen, I could be forced, against my will, to disrupt the intended course of my life, to fight in a war that I didn't support, for a cause in which I didn't believe, to kill strangers merely because I was ordered to do so, and to risk permanent emotional harm as well as physical injury, disfigurement, or death. Later, it became clear to me that I would be forced, against my will, to support a corrupt and oppressive police state, and to obey its every whim and edict. Any disobedience would result in severe punishment.

There is a need to create ideals even when you can't see any route by which to achieve them, because if there are no ideals then there can be no hope and then one would be completely in the dark, in a hopeless blind alley.

- Andrei Sakharov, Interview with Swedish RTV, July 2, 1973.

By the 1980's, I'd started doing something about my status. I terminated any agreements that I'd previously made that might be construed as creating obligations under a jurisdiction of citizenship. That included such things as my driver's license, my Social Security number, my voter's registration, my passport, and so forth. Thereafter, I declined to make any other agreements that would have the effect of subjecting me to the jurisdiction of the United States. Consequently, I no longer had any obligations to the United States. Any such jurisdiction that's imposed on me by force doesn't make me a citizen. It makes me a slave. The effect is that I'm free of citizenship and its obligations.

Some time during the 1990's, a lawyer told me that I was still a citizen because I'd failed to follow the government's mandatory procedure for terminating citizenship. That's about what I'd expect from a lawyer. I'd been presumed to be a citizen, without my own informed consent, and under the shadow of a substantial failure of disclosure, at a time when I was a minor. Consequently, I didn't have any obligation to be a citizen, to remain a citizen, to ask for permission to not be a citizen, or to follow some bureaucrat's procedure in the matter. I didn't fail to do something. Failure implies an obligation, which I didn't have. I declined to do something. There's a difference. I don't need to prove that I'm not a citizen. Any bureaucrat who believes that I am a citizen must bear the burden of proof, and I don't have to help him. The presumption in such matters must always be in favor of the person, and never in favor of the government. Nobody should have to be a citizen unless he chooses to be one.

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to change because government could not put that many people in prison, and, if it could, it would still be without funds for its military operations, and solutions other than military ones would have to be found. It is the same today, except that the urgency is much greater, for the "military operations" of old have now become "extermination programs."

People who contribute substantially each year to these extermination programs - and there is no way to avoid doing so when giving tax funds to the IRS - are, whether they like to think so or not, engaging in "crimes against peace," something that is forbidden by our moral code, by the Nuremberg Tribunal and by other treaties to which the United States is signatory. The excuse, "We are only obeying orders of our duly-constituted government," is, of course, empty and meaningless. The Nuremberg principles held that preparing to engage in crimes against peace is, in itself, a crime against peace, and that people cannot hide behind orders given by government when they personally commit those crimes against peace.

Those "good Germans" of the 1930s and early 1940s, who knew they were building death camps, and knew they were building those other means of human extermination, justified their acts on the grounds that they "had to obey the law." People who finance the horror weapons of today are in the same category. Disobeying a statutory law is of course, illegal but it is not necessarily wrong. The higher laws often cannot be obeyed without disobeying some lower ones. Clearly a choice has to be made.

Holding back money from what one vitally opposes so that one can give it instead to what one vitally favors is as old as civilization itself. From history we learn that this practice existed in many parts of the world, in England, India, and the United States in the American Colonies. Probably no resistance has been more effective or more honored. People in these countries, who stopped their money, cut off from government a source of revenue that government had come to depend on, and they also made clear, thereby, their open opposition to certain government laws and practices.

Our responsibility extends, of course, beyond government demands into the whole of society, and we should be ready at any time to do what we believe to be right. We are creatures of the whole earth, not just one strip of it, so, if we aspire to be citizens of something, we should aspire to become citizens of the globe. Hope for the future is dependent on many more people acting on their consciences, becoming bolder and going further than they have yet gone, for the human conscience has a power all its own. V

War Tax Resistance

By Ernest Bromley

[Editor's Note: According to Wikipedia, Ernest Bromley (1912-1997) was "a pioneer of the modern American tax resistance movement," as well as a founding member of the Freedom Riders (1961) and "Peacemakers," (1948) an organization to encourage "pacifism, and resistance to war taxes, and the draft." During World War II, "in 1942, he refused to display a 'defense tax stamp' on his car," and was jailed for 60 days. In the 1970s, the I.R.S. tried and failed to seize his home for non-payment of taxes. In 1977, the War Resisters League awarded him and his wife, Marion, "its annual Peace Award." The piece reprinted below was originally written for THE CATHOLIC WORKER, June-July 1984, and was reprinted in their March-April 1998 issue.]

In 1945, before any of us knew that such a thing as an atom bomb existed, the United States dropped one on the unaware and innocent populace of a Japanese city. If we had known that such a weapon existed, we could have predicted, with almost total certainty, that it would be used, for where in history can we find a weapon that was built, but was not used, was produced, yet was kept on the shelf as a museum piece?

I am glad I did not participate in financing the atom bomb. My concentration, however, is on not financing the more grotesque and grisly weapons being planned today, one of them even being called the "ultimate

weapon." We have indeed become a society of butchers, as Bertrand Russell said a few years ago. If this ultimate weapon should come, the ultimate danger will come right along with it, the ultimate danger for everyone on the planet. No way, then, can exist for getting rid of that danger without first getting rid of that weapon.

[P]eace is an impossibility so long as the state exists. If one wishes to have peace, one must abolish ... the state.

- Rudolf Grossman (1882-1942), Austrian anarcho-pacifist quoted in Peter Brock, FREEDOM FROM WAR (1991), p. 248.

During World War II, I was aware that the government wanted both "you and your money." There has been a change. The government now wants your money only, for it is your money that constructs those almost self-operating weapons that can destroy everybody and everything. The government has been making it plainer and plainer that today's combat soldier is the taxpayer - the person who provides the cash to produce and deploy the push-button hardware and software for mass annihilation. The world is now spending \$1.3 million every minute toward this end at the same time that it robs the already poor and destitute.

Back at the turn of the century, Leo Tolstoy showed us that individuals shouldered great responsibility for warfare. If widespread refusal of military taxes could take place, he said, something in government would have

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