

The Voluntaryist

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

October 1993

Major Crimes of the United States Government: 1776-1993

By Carl Watner

Because of its very high legitimacy rating, the government of the United States does not generally use "direct" violence to enforce its edicts. Since it has trained so many of its citizens so well, they are inclined to obey "voluntarily." Hence, most people tend to think of "their" government as some sort of heaven-sent institution designed to dispense benevolence and goodness. The purpose of this article is to debunk that view of the State by briefly reviewing the major crimes (crimes being defined as an invasion of person or rightfully owned property) committed in the name of, or by agents of, the government of the United States of America.

As the following narrative demonstrates, the American State, like all other States in history, is a coercive and exploitative institution. It is still a criminal institution, regardless of how "democratic" it appears to be. Even though we have one of the highest standards of living in the world in the U.S., we should never lose sight of the fact that the lesser of two evils is still evil. The primary difference between States is simply the amount of violence they are required to exert in order to maintain power. The more successful and long-lived States usually exercise less physical force because they are more adept at waging psychological warfare, and thus capturing the minds and spirits of their citizens. As the recent elections show us, the emphasis on electoral "participation" is to focus on "Who should rule us," not to raise the question: "Should we be ruled at all?" It is practically a foregone conclusion that we need leaders to direct a government that robs us of nearly half the fruits of our labor, registers our births and deaths, destroys our money, and regulates and governs us in thousands of ways.

It would take a series of books to enumerate and discuss all the crimes of the United States government. What this brief review attempts to do is put the major crimes of the United States government in perspective. THE VOLUNTARYIST is far more interested in promoting positive alternatives than in decrying the evils of statism, but it is necessary to "know the enemy." We can do so only by examining its dark, dark history.

American Revolutionary War Era, 1776-1798

...Expropriation of Property

Both our federal government and the state governments of the thirteen colonies were born amidst violence and an orgy of expropriation. During the Revolution most states passed laws voiding all debts owed by Americans to loyalists, and confiscating the holdings of those people who remained loyal to the Crown. Such confiscations were used as a tool of the national and state governments in an effort to build loyalty. Confiscated land and property were used to reward and enrich Revolutionary War leaders and their friends. Some was parcelled out among small farmers and soldiers who fought for the cause, in order to create a mass base of support for the new government. "Indeed, this became a characteristic of the new nation: finding itself possessed of enormous wealth, it could create the richest ruling class in history, and still have enough for the middle classes to act as a buffer between the rich and the dispossessed."

...People's Tribunals, Loyalty Oaths, and Censorship of the Press

In nearly every community, Committees of Safety were formed by supporters of the Revolution. The function of these groups was to identify potential Loyalist sentiment, write and administer loyalty oaths, conduct 'ad hoc' people's trials to punish those

suspected of committing disloyal acts, and to pass bills of attainder, by which loyalists were deprived of their life or property. In New York state over 1000 people were convicted of treason. In 1778, 400 people were attainted and banished from the state of Pennsylvania.

"All of the colonies passed wartime laws prohibiting the publishing of materials supporting the King's authority over the emerging states." Laws were also passed which made it a crime to decry the Continental currency, which became nearly worthless as the Revolution progressed.

...Incongruities of the American Revolution

The Founding Fathers were in rebellion because **they** were denied the rights of representation which, like other subjects of the King, they would have enjoyed had they lived in England. Their acts of disobedience and tax refusal were not an attempt to overthrow the authority of government. "They went into rebellion first in order to gain admittance into, and then take possession of, the organs of government." They had no intention of extending the recognition of individual rights to native American Indians, whose lands had been mostly stolen, to Negroes, who themselves, or whose ancestors had been kidnapped and were held in slavery. Nor did they intend to extend suffrage to indentured servants, women, and poor white working people. The Revolutionary slogan—"No taxation without representation"—was obviously not a plea for no taxes, but rather a demonstration that the American revolutionists believed that robbery (taxation) of themselves and their neighbors would be politically proper so long as they had a say in the process.

...From the Articles of Confederation to the U.S. Constitution—A Coup d'état, 1786-1791

The U.S. Constitution was clearly a work of genius because it "created the most effective system of national control devised in modern times, and showed future generations of leaders how to keep control with a minimum of coercion, maximum of law—all made palatable by the fanfare of patriotism" and national unity. The Constitutional Convention was engineered mostly by wealthy men and politicians who realized that under the Articles of Confederation the federal government lacked the power to become a strong, centralized force in the new nation. The Constitutional Convention was supposed to amend the Articles of Confederation, not replace it with a new form of government. Any proposed changes were supposed to have been ratified by **all** the states before they were adopted. "But the Framers defied these legal stipulations, abandoned their authorization to amend the Articles only, designed an entirely new centralized national government, and inserted in the Constitution that it should go into effect when ratified by **only nine states**." What the Framers "actually did, stripped of all fiction and verbiage, was to assume constituent powers, ordain a constitution of government and liberty and demand a **plebiscite** thereon over the heads of all existing legally organized powers." Had Julius Caesar or Napoleon committed these acts, their actions would have been pronounced a **coup d'état**.

The passage of the first ten amendments to the Constitution (the Bill of Rights) was designed to bolster the weak popular support for the new Constitution. These amendments appeared to make the new central government the guardian of the people's liberty—to speak, to publish, to worship, to petition, to assemble, to be tried by a jury of their peers, and to have their homes secured against official intruders. But using the Constitution to protect the people from its own government was like having the proverbial fox guard the hen house. Within less than ten years

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The Voluntaryist

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Potpourri from The Editor's Desk

1. "Self Help"

It may be of comparatively little consequence how a man is governed from without, whilst every thing depends upon how he governs himself from within. The greatest slave is not he who is ruled by a despot, great though that evil be, but he who is in the thrall of his own moral ignorance, selfishness, and vice. Nations who are thus enslaved at heart can not be freed by any mere changes of masters or of institutions; and so long as the fatal delusion prevails, that liberty solely depends upon and consists in government, so long will such changes, no matter at what cost they may be effected, have as little practical and lasting result as the shifting of the figures in a phantasmagoria. The solid foundations of liberty must rest upon individual character, which is also the only sure guaranty for social security and national progress."

—Samuel Smiles, SELF-HELP, 1859.

2. "Family Values vs. Permissiveness"

"In today's America we live in the most permissive society since Nero's Rome."

—Robert Bartley, Editor, THE WALL STREET JOURNAL
September 3, 1992, p. A10

3. "Use What Talents You Possess"

Edward Everett Hale wrote the following Credo for The Lend A Hand Society. It is a good reminder that "The woods would be very silent if no birds sung except those that sang best."

I am only one,
but I am still one;
I cannot do everything,
But still I can do something;
And because I cannot do everything
I will not refuse to do something that I can do.

4. "SOCIAL SECURITY: Lies, Myths and Reality"

The above is the title of a new book (131 pages) by James Turk, and is available from Greenfield Books, Box 4682, Greenwich, Conn. 06830 for \$15 per book postpaid. This book gives a complete overview of the federal government's balance sheet, and predicts that interest on the national debt will soon approach 30% of the federal government's income. It reminds us that no debtor can continue to borrow and borrow forever. A bankrupt government and rotting currency are the historical prescriptions for tyranny and dictatorship.

5. "SEND IN THE CLOWNS"

Richard James has penned an irreverent attack (38 pages) on our electoral system and campaign politics. His attitude is neatly summed up by a quote from H. L. Mencken appearing on the first page:

The government consists of a gang of men exactly like you and me. They have, taking one with another, no special talent for the business of government, they have only a talent for getting and holding office. Their principal device to that end is to search out groups who pant and pine for something they can't get and promise to give it to them. Nine times out of ten, that promise is worth nothing. The tenth time is made good by looting A to satisfy B. In other

words, government is a broker in pillage, and every election is sort of an advance auction of stolen goods.

Available from Micro-Publishing Associates by sending \$5 for shipping and handling to 3402 Palo Verde Circle, Camarillo, CA 93012.

6. "Self-Help Is the Best Help"

"There is a strange spirit abroad in the times. The whole people is hugging the delusion that law is a panacea. Whatever the ill or the wrong or the ideal, immediately follows the suggestion—enact a law. ...

"What can be the result of this tendency but the softening of the moral fibre of the people? When there is an unwillingness to accept responsibility for one's life and for making the most of it there is a loss of strong, red-blooded, rugged independence and will power to grapple with the wrong of the world and to establish justice through the volition of those concerned.

"Many of the things for which many are now deludedly demanding legislative regulation should and must be worked out by those concerned. Initiative, aggressive conviction, enlightened self-interest, are the characteristics that must be dominant among the people if the nation is to make substantial progress toward better living and higher ideals. Legislation can not secure these characteristics... "

—Samuel Gompers,
THE AMERICAN FEDERATIONIST,
Vol. 22 (1915), p. 113.

7. "Nonviolent Resistance in Nazi Germany"

In the September 1992 ATLANTA MONTHLY, Nathan Stoltzfus published an article entitled "Dissent in Nazi Germany." His work, based on years of research in Germany and its archives, reveals that nonviolent resistance can some times be successfully implemented against even the most ruthless dictators. Stoltzfus focuses on three nonviolent protests.

In early 1943, almost two thousand Jewish men, who had been married to Aryan spouses and previously exempted from being sent to concentration camps, were interned in Berlin. Many of the men's wives staged a week-long vigil and protest, demanding the release of their husbands. Even though Gestapo headquarters was close by, and the protesters could have easily been shot, Joseph Goebbels eventually ordered the Jews released. His action was affirmed by Heinrich Himmler.

The "mother's revolt" in mid-1941 was an explosive civil disobedience action by devout Catholics who were reacting to a Bavarian decree that all crucifixes be removed from the district schools, and that the usual school prayers be replaced by Nazi slogans and songs. In the face of noncooperation and public indignation, Catholic mothers initiated a strike against the schools, refusing to send their children to classes, and large public demonstrations were staged against the "godless" regime. Adolf Wagner, Bavarian minister of education, had to rescind his orders.

While this was happening in Bavaria, a well-known Catholic bishop, Clemens August Von Galen, was protesting the Nazi policy of euthanasia. "In July and August of 1941 Von Galen preached three blistering sermons from his pulpit in Munster-Westphalia against the lawless power of the Gestapo, warning his congregation that no one was safe from arbitrary arrest and punishment, and that, according to the logic of a program that sacrificed those who were of no obvious productive use to the war effort, that the state could soon be administering euthanasia to wounded soldiers at the front as well as to cripples, the old, and the weak." Public opinion favored Von Galen, and although euthanasia was not officially terminated, it was slowed down and made considerably less visible.

Stoltzfus implies that nonviolent action could have probably prevented the Nazi holocaust. He would agree with Martin Luther King, Jr. who said that "if Protestant and Catholics had engaged in nonviolent direct action, and made the oppression of the Jews their very own oppression, and had come into the streets beside the Jew to scrub the sidewalks, and had Gentiles worn the stigmatizing yellow armbands by the millions, a unique form of mass resistance to the Nazi regime might have developed."

Major Crimes

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the government was breaking out of its own constitutional limitations. According to the First Amendment passed in 1791, Congress was to "make no law... abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press..." Yet as early as 1798, Congress passed a series of laws plainly violating this amendment.

...Alien and Sedition Acts, 1798

Three alien laws and a sedition act were passed by the Federalist majorities in both houses of Congress in an effort to curb their political opposition. In particular, the Sedition Law made it a crime to speak or write any scandalous, false, or malicious words against the government of the United States, or to stir up sedition or opposition to any lawful act of the President or Congress. All the leading anti-federalist newspapers in the country were attacked. Some were put out of business, others suspended publication. Ten Americans (including some newspaper editors) were jailed for speaking out against the national government, and their imprisonment was held to be constitutional. Members of the Supreme Court, sitting as appellate judges in 1798-1800, held that the common law concept of seditious libel still ruled in America. This meant that although Congress could not exercise prior restraint, it could punish treasonous speech or writing after their utterance. Although Jefferson, an anti-federalist, had opposed the passage of these laws when he was Vice President under John Adams, he used these same laws to silence his critics after he was elected President in 1800.

The First Half of the Nineteenth Century

...Andrew Jackson and the Indians

The military exploits of Andrew Jackson (seventh President of the United States, 1828-1836) during the War of 1812, demonstrate that this war was not just a war of survival against Britain, but "a war for expansion of the new nation into Florida, Canada and into Indian territory." After the Battle of Horseshoe Bend in 1814, and after his victory over the British in New Orleans in 1815, Jackson got himself appointed treaty commissioner and dictated a treaty which took away half the land of the Creek nation. One historian called this land grab "the largest single Indian cession of southern American land." Jackson was also instrumental in beginning the Seminole War of 1818, which led to the American acquisition of Florida in 1819.

After Jackson was elected President in 1828, stealing land from the Indians became the order of the day. Wherever Indians lived in the states of Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi, they were subjected to pressures from white settlers, farmers, trappers and hunters to move westward. The eastern Cherokees had begun modeling themselves after the white man, becoming farmers, blacksmiths, craftsmen, and owners of property. However, none of their attempts to assimilate themselves made their land any less desirable to the whites. "Jackson's 1829 message to Congress made his position clear: 'I informed the Indians inhabiting parts of Georgia and Alabama that their attempt to establish an independent government would not be countenanced by the Executive of the United States, and advised them to emigrate beyond the Mississippi or submit to the laws of those states'."

After his re-election in 1832, Jackson moved to speed up the removal of the Creek, Cherokee, and Seminole Indians from Alabama, Georgia, and Florida. Immediately after Creek delegates signed the Treaty of Washington in 1832 (under which they gave up 5 million acres of land, and agreed to removal beyond the Mississippi), a white invasion of Creek lands began. As one historian put it, "no agreement between white men and Indians had ever been so soon abrogated as the 1832 Treaty of Washington. Within days the promises made in it on behalf of the United States had been broken." New treaties were made and broken, and finally in 1836, the Cherokees were summoned to New Echota, Georgia to sign a new treaty of removal. Only five hundred of the 17,000 Cherokees in Georgia appeared, but the treaty was signed despite the fact that most of the tribe was not represented. After the treaty had been ratified in the Senate of the United States, President Van Buren (succeeding Jackson)

ordered the army to use whatever force was necessary to move the Cherokees westward. Nearly all of the 17,000 Cherokees were rounded up and confined in stockades. Their emigration, known as the Trail of Tears, began on October 1, 1838. "As they moved westward, they began to die—of sickness, of drought, of the heat, of exposure." It has been estimated that four thousand died, either during confinement or while on the march.

During the 1960s when Lyndon Johnson spoke about American "commitments" and when President Nixon talked about Russia's failure to respect international treaties, the Indians of the United States had every right to laugh in their faces. "The United States government had signed more than four hundred treaties with Indians and violated every single one" of them. As one Indian put it, "They [the white man] made us many promises, more than I can remember, but they never kept but one: they promised to take our land and they took it." During the course of American history, no group of people—except the Negro slave—were more criminally mistreated or persecuted by the white man's law than the American Indian.

The Civil War Era

...Negro Slavery

The essence of chattel slavery is the ownership and control of one person by another. Slavery violates not only the ethical precepts of the greater part of mankind, but blatantly negates the very concept of individual rights. Although neither the words 'slave' or 'slavery' were used in the Constitution of the United States, the federal government and numerous individual state governments upheld the legality of slavery in their own judicial systems. (For example, the U.S. Supreme Court held that the slave, Dred Scott, could not sue for his freedom. In the eyes of the law, he had no standing in court since he was property, not a person.) Several northern states either abolished slavery or refused to uphold the claims of southern owners in their state courts.

Under the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 owners of southern slaves were enabled to recapture runaway slaves without observing due process of law. Alleged runaways were denied trial by jury, and instead were brought before federal commissioners who were empowered to return them to slavery. Commissioners were paid \$10 for each person returned to slavery and \$5 for each person set free. Federal marshals, whose job it was to capture fugitives, were empowered to summon citizens to their aid.

...The Civil War

Although it is often thought that the Civil War was fought to abolish slavery, in President Lincoln's first inaugural address he affirmed his intention not to interfere with slavery in the South. When Union General Fremont declared martial law in Missouri, and stated that slaves whose owners were resisting the United States were to be freed, his orders were countermanded by Lincoln. Even under the terms of the Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863, slaves behind Union lines were not set free. Rather than the abolition of slavery, the war was fought to preserve the Union by preventing secession, and to ensure the continued domination and control by the ruling classes of the West and North. The Civil War was one of the most traumatic periods in U.S. history. During five years of terrible conflict, it pitted state against state and family against family. Some 600,000 died out of a population of 31,443,000.

During the Civil War:

..."Complete censorship was imposed on all telegraphic communications." Lincoln seized the telegraph lines and established censorship over all transmissions; wartime reporters were required to get clearance for their writings.

..."Anti-administration newspapers were closed, their editors jailed or banished."

..."Tens of thousands of civilians were arrested for secessionist tendencies or for refusal to take an oath of allegiance to the Union. Many were tried and punished by military tribunals."

..."Confederate leaders were jailed after the war without ever being brought to trial." At the conclusion of the War, Jefferson Davis was held for two years at Fort Monroe before formal charges were pressed.

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Nutrition Is Too Important To Be Left to the Free Market

By Dan Endsley

The year is 2092, and finally, public grocery shopping is available to all who need it. For years, reactionary and cantankerous anti-social elements had argued that the free marketplace was adequate to provide all the groceries that people need. But the continued popularity of unnutritious "junk food," fad diets, home growing, and even, in some cases, outright fasting, finally convinced people that grocery shopping was too important to be left to private enterprise—any more than, say, delivery of the mail, the nation's defense, or the education of the nation's youth could be left to the marketplace.

Shopping at grocery stores owned and operated by the government is now mandatory for people 16 or older, and is optional for children and youths. Suburban and rural shoppers are required to shop at a selected store near their homes, while most intercity shoppers must ride buses across town to insure equal access to all grocery products. Government stores are open only on weekdays from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Shoppers are categorized by age and required to shop in groups of 25 to 50 people. Each group is assigned to a state-licensed and certified grocer. This person shepherds them up and down the aisles, telling them which foods are desirable and which aren't. Shoppers are required to spend a certain amount of time in each department; say, 15 minutes in the deli, 25 in the grocery, 10 in the bakery, 5 in the video section. Dawdling in one section for too long is not permitted, nor are shoppers allowed to skip sections that aren't suited to their taste, even if they have no taste for, say, cottage cheese or pork rinds.

Shoppers are rewarded on how well they shop—or, more precisely, on how well they follow the instructions of their particular grocer. In some cases their performance is measured by tests, in others by the evaluation of the grocer to whom they are assigned, and very often by a combination of those two methods.

Those with the highest test scores are labelled "honor shoppers" and given bumper stickers to place on the rears of their cars. Those who score lowest are labelled "at risk shoppers," or "shopping disabled," and forced to shop in special, remedial stores, or in the regular stores but at special hours, with specially-trained cashiers, baggers, etc. The grocers and store managers are elated to identify "shopping disabled" people. They receive additional state funding to treat this affliction. "Smart shoppers," who at times know their way around the grocery store better than the certified grocers, pose more of a challenge to them, and are blamed for fostering elitist attitudes of "shopping meritocracy" and lowering the self-esteem of less gifted shoppers.

Stores are closed during June, July, and August, except as necessary to accommodate those shoppers who failed to shop adequately during the other nine months. The government, at the urging of the grocers, store managers, bus drivers, and others in the shopping system, discourages and restricts the growing of food at home. These special-interest groups argue that only mass-produced, store-bought foods are healthy and beneficial. In most states, the "grow-at-home" movement has been restricted by laws that require "home-growers" to be fully certified grocers, but in a few states a modest level of home-growing is tolerated.

Some shoppers prefer to shop at private stores. These stores, in many cases operated by churches, are widely acknowledged to offer more variety, higher quality and lower prices than government stores, despite extensive regulations requiring them to offer goods and services nearly identical to those offered by government stores. However, those who prefer to patronize private or church stores must pay the government grocery stores just as if they were buying all their groceries there, so relatively few can afford to shop at such establishments. The grocers at the public grocery stores often resent the private shoppers for not shopping at the public stores, although a high percentage of grocers send their own children to shop at private stores. This practice is strongly discouraged by the local grocery boards.

These boards, which are elected at regular intervals, hire the managers of the stores, oversee their budgets, and set the prices that all who live in the area must pay at the government stores. In most states, the local grocery boards are overseen by the State Department of Groceries. Because the system of public grocery stores is so expensive to run, in recent years an increasing share of funding has come from federal aid to groceries. At first, political conservatives opposed federal aid to grocery stores, arguing that it diminished local and state control of eating. However, with the election of a conservative President in 2080 and his appointment of a "grocery czar" the following year, they came to appreciate the value of encouraging proper nutrition on a nationwide basis, especially in areas where conservatives are out of power.

All government stores carry virtually the same products, though there has in recent years been a trend toward "mandatory grocery diversification," requiring stores to offer oriental food, soul food, and Mexican food. This came about after a presidential commission examined the problem of grocery store dropouts— young people from cultural minorities who quit shopping, complaining that the government-mandated groceries were insensitive to their culinary needs. But attempts to lure them back—ranging from public service advertisements, to sermons from authorities, to the enactment of mandatory shopping laws and the hiring of special police officers to arrest truants, and special counselors to convince them to stick with the government-mandated foods—failed.

A more "liberal" element has argued for a requirement that all Americans purchase a mandated variety of different ethnic foods, in the interest of what came to be known as "multicuisinism." Conservatives reminisced about the good old days, when grocery stores were clean, polite, and quiet places to shop, a time when shoppers appreciated the privileges of shopping. They declared, "if white bread was good enough for our parents and grandparents, it's good enough for everyone." Known as "white-breaders," this group managed to take over some local grocery boards and the departments of education in a few states.

In recent years, there has been a well-financed campaign in favor of "choice in shopping," a system in which shoppers would receive "grocery vouchers," which could be spent at any public grocery store or at any of a handful of government-licensed "private" stores. The administrators and employees of the government stores argue that enactment of this policy would mark the end of grocery shopping for all but the rich, a vast increase in poor eating habits, and untold misery. Those who advocate the idea of vouchers were accused of being in the pay of private grocers. So far, advocates of government stores have prevailed with the argument that nutrition is too important to be left to the vulgar allures of the loudest hawk.

The public shopping system isn't working perfectly, but it is certainly better than the old days, when people shopped wherever and whenever they wanted. And experts in Washington have announced a shopping reform that will remedy many of the problems with the current public grocery system. "Shopping 2100" is designed to make our shoppers the best in the world.

After "Shopping 2100" is implemented, nationally recognized authorities on groceries will design the grocery stores of the future and provide for national shopping tests so that each state will know where its shoppers rank. Top-performing states will be given more money as a reward. The lowest-performing states will be more closely regulated to help them become top states. This program will be carried out until every state's shoppers are designated "above average." At that stage, according to the program's backers, the nation's public grocery system will have achieved total dominance over "the commanding heights of the food chain."

(Reprinted by permission of the author from LIBERTY, Sept. 1992.) ☐

"Nonviolence is a flop. The only bigger flop is violence."

—Joan Baez

Major Crimes

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...“Property was confiscated from pro-slavery whites; slaves, rather than being freed, originally became the property of the U.S. government.” The First Confiscation Act of August 6, 1861 “declared that all property used by the Confederates in their insurrection was forfeited and became the property of the government.” Besides the telegraph, Lincoln seized control of the railroads.

...“Habeas corpus was illegally and unconstitutionally suspended.” Lincoln not only used military tribunals to try Confederate soldiers, he resorted to military (rather than civilian) arrests and trials in Union controlled areas.

...Federal troops were used to break up industrial strikes during the war. “Soldiers were sent to Cold Springs, New York to end a strike at a gun works where workers wanted a wage increase. Striking machinists and tailors in St. Louis were forced back to work by the army. In Tennessee, a Union general arrested and removed from the state 200 striking mechanics. When engineers on the Reading Railroad struck, troops broke the strike, as they did with miners in Tioga County, Pa.”

...The North resorted to a coercive draft of military soldiers under the Conscription Act of 1863. Violent draft riots broke out in the North to protest the fact that members of the wealthier class could buy a substitute or pay \$300 to avoid military service.

...The first income taxes in U.S. history were imposed both in the North and the Confederacy.

...On Dec. 21, 1861, the Northern government reneged on its contractual promise to redeem its money in gold by suspending specie payments. Government issue of legal tender notes (“greenbacks”) began the following year.

Military Intervention and Empire, 1845-1900

The United States government has been concerned with expanding its geographical hegemony ever since its inception in 1776. The Northwest Ordinance of 1787, the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, the War of 1812, and the Indian Wars of the 1820s and 1830s are all evidence of the dreams of manifest destiny held by public office holders and private land speculators. The Mexican-American War of 1848 was instigated by the killing of an American colonel near the Rio Grande River in 1846. President Polk began hostilities by sending American troops “into what was disputed territory, historically controlled and inhabited by Mexicans.” The indiscriminate bombardment (by American warships) of the Mexican port city of Vera Cruz resulted in the killing of civilians, the destruction of the post office, and a surgical hospital. The war ended with the cession of large amount of Mexican territory to the U.S. government.

American armed forces have repeatedly been used to protect American interests in foreign nations. A State Department publication, “Armed Actions Taken by the United States Without a Declaration of War, 1789-1967,” catalogs more than 125 incidents of intervention in the affairs of other countries during the 178 years in question. This study did not include the more encompassing engagements involving the five declarations of “solemn war” made during the course of U.S. history (the War of 1812, the Mexican-American War of 1848, the Spanish-American War of 1898, World War I, and World War II). (Korea, Vietnam, Grenada, the 1989 invasion of Panama, and Operation Desert Storm did not involve formal declarations of war.) Highly representative of the incidents involving U.S. military was the landing of troops in Hawaii in 1893, ostensibly to protect American lives and property. In reality, the show of force was to promote the formation of a provisional government under Sanford B. Dole. Although this action was later disavowed by the United States, it set the stage for the annexation of the Hawaiian Islands in 1898.

The Spanish-American War led to the annexation of Puerto Rico, Cuba, Wake Island, Guam and the Philippines. In the Philippines, 70,000 American troops were required to squash a fierce guerilla war led by Emilio Aguinaldo. Many brutalities were committed against the native forces, and, as a result, more than 4300

Americans were killed, more deaths than were sustained in the entire war against Spain. Typical of the U.S. attitude toward the Filipinos was the message sent by President Theodore Roosevelt to General Leonard Wood in 1906. Wood’s soldiers had successfully surrounded a Moro stronghold (the Moros were native tribesmen of the Philippines) and killed 600 men, women and children. Roosevelt congratulated Wood and his men “upon the brilliant feat of arms wherein you and they so well upheld the honor of the American flag.”

The Crusade Against Mormon Polygamy, 1862-1890

The first federal legislation directed against the Mormon practice of plural marriage was the Anti-Bigamy Act of 1862. It largely remained a dead-letter law because the Mormons saw it as an unconstitutional attack on their religion. They controlled the territorial courts and juries in the Utah territory, and it was impossible to get indictments or convictions for what they viewed as a non-crime. Under the Edmunds Bill of March 22, 1882, over 12,000 Mormon men and women were disenfranchised and prevented from serving on juries because of their beliefs, and over 1,000 were convicted of unlawful cohabitation. Refusal to deny the existence of a plural marriage was sufficient evidence to convict, which meant six month’s imprisonment, and a \$300 fine. Congress also appropriated a “spotter’s fund,” which paid out \$20 to every informer whose information led to the arrest of a polygamist.

The Edmunds-Tucker Act was adopted on February 19, 1887. The purpose of this federal statute was to destroy the temporal power of the Church of Latter-Day Saints. It did this by 1) dissolving the Church as a legal entity; 2) allowing the Attorney General to commence forfeiture and escheat proceedings to confiscate all Church property in excess of \$50,000 (the Government eventually took possession of over \$1 million of Church property); 3) disenfranchised all women voters in Utah; 4) disinherited the children of plural marriages; and 5) prescribed a test oath to prevent polygamists from voting, holding office, or serving on juries. Many leading Mormons went underground in an effort to evade arrest; others were imprisoned. But in September 1890, the Church capitulated and Wilford Woodruff, President of the Church, issued an Official Declaration under which he authorized the removal of religious sanction from plural marriages. Government receivership of Church property was finally terminated in 1896, when statehood was granted.

Historians have calculated that only 2% of the Church’s membership practiced polygamy during the 1880s. Based on their pronouncements, authorities in the federal government made it plain that they were not so much opposed to plural marriage as they were to the power of the Mormon Church. The Mormons had to be taught to place State before Church. Utah could not become a state until its people were cowed into submission. The “Crusade Against Mormon Polygamy” accomplished this objective.

Labor Unrest and the Use of Government Force, 1870-1915

If the purpose of government is to protect the property of the wealthy, insulate them from competition, provide businessmen with a captive market, an inexpensive source of labor, and inexhaustible pool of natural resources, then it is understandable why local police, state militia men, and federal troops and marshals have been used to break labor strikes. President Hayes sent federal troops to Maryland, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Illinois and Missouri to break the railroad strike of 1877. President Cleveland used troops to crush the Pullman strike of 1895 in Illinois, even though there was no prior violence, and Governor Altgeld protested their deployment.

The Ludlow Massacre of April 1914 demonstrates how deadly governmental force can be. Miners began striking against the Rockefeller coal interests in Colorado in September 1913. After the governor of the state called out the state’s National Guard, there was a machine gun attack on the tents housing strikers and their families in Ludlow, Colorado. At least 26 people were killed, including 11 women and 2 children. In reaction, armed strikers and their supporters began massing in the Colorado mountains. “The governor of Colorado asked for federal troops to restore order, and Woodrow Wilson complied.”

War Is the Health of the State: A Century of War

...World War I

War was declared by the United States against Austria-Hungary on December 7, 1917, in spite of growing American anti-war sentiment and labor unrest. As a result, before, during and after the war a wide array of civil and economic liberties of the American people and resident aliens were trampled upon by government officials.

...“Citizens committees and people’s tribunals were established to try individuals suspected of disloyalty.” In August 1916, Congress created the Council of National Defense to coordinate the activities of local and state committees. “Religious people opposed to the war were thrown in jail, kept in chains and given a diet of bread and water until they renounced their religious convictions.” Some 450 conscientious objectors were court martialed, convicted and jailed. Seventeen were sentenced to death (though these sentences were eventually commuted). Numerous others were imprisoned under the most barbaric conditions.

...“Vigilante organizations with the support and approval of the Department of Justice and local police, kidnapped, ‘arrested,’ and incarcerated thousands without trial.” The American Protective League, a private organization had 250,000 members in 600 cities by the end of the war. The APL’s purpose was to combat draft evasion and combat foreign subversion, and harass foreign radicals and labor unions.

...During the winter and spring of 1919-1920, one of the most massive campaigns of civil liberties violations ever, occurred in the U.S. On Jan. 2, 1920, alone, 2700 people in 33 cities were seized. As a result of the raids, 4000 were arrested, and some 1000 were deported. These raids were organized by President Wilson’s Attorney General, A. Mitchell Palmer, with the help of assistant, J. Edgar Hoover. People of Russian birth, like Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, were forced on transport ships and deported to the USSR—all without due process of law or any sort of trial.

...“The first official federal censorship board was established and given complete control over all printed material.” The War Department established a censorship office, known as the Bureau of Information, headed by Major Douglas MacArthur. The Post Office and Postmaster General received power under the Espionage Act to bar subversive materials from the mails. “Over one hundred publications were suspended and prevented from being printed.”

...The Espionage Act of 1917 and the Sedition Act of 1918 made any criticism of the government a crime. Both were designed to prevent insubordination, mutiny, disloyalty, and refusal to serve in the armed forces. There were over 2,000 prosecutions under the Espionage and Sedition Acts, and nearly 900 convictions.

...“The government directed 75,000 people around the country to deliver official propaganda speeches written in Washington.” On April 14, 1917, President Wilson created the Committee on Public Information. It propagandized the war from the administration’s point of view and helped convince the general populace that war-time restrictions on their civil liberties were justified and acceptable.

...“President Wilson seized all wireless establishments and instituted censorship of cable communication on April 6, 1917.”

...“The Trading with the Enemy Act not only allowed the U.S. to confiscate property owned by enemies, but also property of allies of enemies. Under the Act the government confiscated property of citizens of Turkey and Bulgaria, both allies of Germany, but against whom the U.S. was not officially at war.” Property of loyal citizens was also confiscated to assist the war effort. President Wilson seized 11 industrial plants during World War I.

...World War II

Repression during World War I was only a dress rehearsal for what was to occur during World War II. “For every person falling

afoul of official or spontaneous persecution in the First World War, there were more than ten times as many victims in the Second.” The ratio of repression to dissent during this war was probably higher than at any other time in U.S. history. The interned Japanese and Nisei alone numbered one hundred twenty thousand in 1942. One well-respected legal scholar has labeled the treatment of the Japanese as “the most drastic invasion of rights of citizens of the United States by their own government that has thus far occurred in the history of our nation.”

During the years of World War II the United States government:

...Maneuvered the Japanese government into attacking Pearl Harbor, and then engineered a coverup to hide its knowledge of the attack.

...“Besides interning nearly 120,000 Japanese-Americans, 70,000 of whom were U.S. citizens, in domestic concentration camps, the U.S. military also ordered some 900 Aleuts to leave their birthplace after the Japanese invasion of the Western Aleutian Islands. The U.S. military destroyed their homes and village church.

...“Established strict censorship over all media, extending not only to war-related news, but to any reports that might lower homefront morale.” Immediately after Pearl Harbor, FDR gave FBI Director Hoover emergency authority to censor and control all communications going in or out of the country. The Office of Censorship was established in early 1942 to exercise the authority granted Hoover. The U.S. Steel Shareholders’ Report of 1941 was censored to show production figures as “00,000 thousand tons” of steel.

...“Closed down the pro-Nazi press.” During 1942, seventy papers were banned from the mail and/or censored.

...“Enacted a peace-time sedition act, making criticism of the government a crime.” The Smith Act of June 28, 1940 prohibited the advocacy of insubordination, disloyalty, mutiny or refusal to serve in the military and violent or forceful overthrow of any government in the U.S.

...Prevented foreign writers and artists who held opinions disliked by our government from entering the country, and/or imprisoned some whose political opinions it disliked. The Voorhis Act of 1940 gave the President power to exclude anyone “whose ideas were found dangerous.” Ezra Pound, the well-known poet, was confined to a mental hospital, after the war, even though the government could not convict him of treason.

...“Expropriated private factories due to ‘inefficient management.’” During the war at least 47 industrial facilities (coal mines, railroads, textile plants, among others) were seized by presidential decree to prevent labor disputes from affecting the war effort. The government also closed down all gold mines during the war, in an effort to free up workers for the war effort.

...Initiated the federal “pay as you go” tax withholding plan whereby taxpayers had funds deducted from their wages before any tax payments were actually due. The result was a huge interest-free loan by millions of taxpayers to the federal government. Taxpayers became less concerned with the actual amount of their taxes, and more concerned with how much of a refund they would receive at year’s end.

...Dropped the first atomic bombs on populated areas at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan destroying large portions of both cities, killing thousands, and inducing radiation sickness in countless more.

...The Post-World War II and Korean War Era

...The McCarran Act of Sept. 23, 1950 authorized the creation of 12 detention camps for the purpose of holding innocent citizens detained under presidentially declared emergency decrees. It also created restrictive immigration requirements, basing exclusion or deportation of aliens on their political ideology. It created a Subversive Activities Control Board, which could declare any organization ‘communist,’ thus requiring it to register with the Attorney General.

...The Department of State denied passports to hundreds of progressives, including one member of Congress and a U.S. Supreme Court Justice.

...In 1947, President Truman created the Federal Employees Loyalty Program. It screened over 20,000,000 citizens for 'subversion.'

...During this time the FBI expanded into a full-scale nationwide secret police agency. Beginning in 1936, Franklin Roosevelt gave the FBI authority to spy on subversive organizations. Its authority was expanded during World War II. In 1948, the FBI had a list of 26,000 people to arrest in the event of a national emergency; in 1972 its Administrative Index still had over 15,000 names listed. In 1987, in the FBI building in Washington, there were over 35,000 linear feet of domestic intelligence files. The rest of the FBI's work only required 23,000 linear feet of file space. The most important function of the FBI was clearly not crime fighting, but rather political repression and surveillance.

...During the post-World War II period, the federal government conducted secret nuclear bomb testing in the Western states, and refused to acknowledge the potential danger of atomic radiation exposure to residents of those areas.

...The Last Three Decades: 1960-1990

Governments never cease being coercive and exploitative, protective of their own institutional interests, and the interests of those who control and manipulate them behind the scenes. The last thirty-plus years of American history only reinforces the observation that some sort of national "enemy" or national "crisis" is always needed as an excuse to justify the government's behavior. During the 1960s,

... "the U.S. government launched a comprehensive program to silence underground newspapers; anti-war editors were jailed, presses were bombed, reporters were harassed, news vendors were arrested for distributing newspapers, newsrooms were infiltrated by government spies, and businessmen were intimidated"—to prevent them from advertising in opposition newspapers.

... "Police illegally broke into the headquarters of the Socialist Workers Party on the average of once every three weeks during the early 1960s."

... "National Guard and local police shot and killed unarmed, innocent and non-violent protestors", such as those at Kent State.

... "Conspiracy trials—often no more than kangaroo courts—were organized to remove the leaders of anti-war and minority people's movements."

... Undercover police, acting as agent provocateurs, "infiltrated peaceful organizations and then encouraged and led anti-war and civil rights protestors in bombings and other violent activities."

... "The FBI engaged in a concerted program to destroy the New Left and the black movement." The FBI's Counter Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) was begun in 1956, and expanded until during the early 1970s it included: illegal eavesdropping and telephone bugs; spread of disinformation, harassment arrests, fabrication of evidence, and complicity in assassinations.

... "Local police spied on churches, unions, and organizations engaged in peaceful protest activity."

... During the early 1980s, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) developed a secret "Martial Law Plan" containing details for suspension of the Constitution, roundup and detention of dissent citizens, censorship of all telecommunications, and the seizure of private property.

... "Every federal intelligence agency—the FBI, CIA, NSA and military intelligence units—spied on U.S. citizens."

... In 1976, Congress observed that "our Constitutional government has been weakened by 41 consecutive years of emergency rule." In this century, at least four Presidentially declared emergencies have never been terminated. These states of national emergency were declared by:

... "President Roosevelt in 1933 to fight the Great Depression" under which 1) the U.S. Treasury reneged

on its obligation to redeem its paper currency in gold, and 2) U.S. citizens were required to surrender their gold to the national government;

... "President Truman in 1950 during the Korean War";

... "President Nixon in 1970 to handle the Post Office strike"; and

... "President Nixon in 1971 to meet balance of payment problems" during which the U.S. refused to honor its gold obligations to foreign countries."

... The IRS has persecuted dissident writers and tax protesters. Some have been convicted and jailed; others have fled underground; while still others have been murdered by government agents while resisting arrest. Examples include Gordon Kahl (murdered), Tupper Saussy (underground) and ex-Congressman George Hansen (imprisoned).

... State and local governments have prosecuted homeschoolers for failure to follow government law. In Louisville, Nebraska, Pastor Everett Sileven was jailed for two months when he failed to close his Christian School at Faith Baptist Church. A Mormon homeschooler, John Singer of Utah, was murdered by state agents for resisting arrest arising out of his refusal to send his children to school.

... State and local laws restrict the use of private property via zoning ordinances and eminent domain confiscations. In the early 1980s residents of Poletown, a neighborhood in Detroit, Michigan, had their land seized and eventually turned over to General Motors Corp., which was going to use the land for a new Cadillac plant. In December 1991 in Skaneateles, New York a private home was razed by the city government, and its owners jailed for contempt of court, because they would not bring their \$370,000, 11,000 square foot "dream house" into compliance with zoning requirements.

... The War on Drugs came into full bloom during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Many people were jailed not only for possession, but for "intent" and "conspiracy" to distribute drugs. Seizure and forfeiture laws were passed to allow both local, state, and federal law enforcement authorities to confiscate property belonging to those accused of using or distributing drugs, or accused of violating money laundering statutes. Federal forfeitures have taken over \$24 billion from tens of thousands of people since 1985. The police may seize anything that they believe was bought from the profits of criminal activity, or anything that was used to facilitate the commission of a crime. Usual due process procedures (like trial by jury) do not apply because it is property—not people—which is being accused of crime. Police have every incentive to exercise these powers because they either keep the property for their own use, or, if it is sold, receive the proceeds.

The list of crimes grows longer and longer as the United States government remains in power. There are undoubtedly numbers of continuing crimes not even mentioned here, including the ongoing collection of a wide array of taxes, many of which appear almost invisible (the federal gas tax we pay on every gallon of gas we purchase, being just one). There can be little doubt that the history of our federal government confirms the inherent criminality of the State. In a voluntarist world, a world without States, crime would still exist. But it is hard to imagine that crime could be institutionalized, legitimized, and accepted like it is today. As a libertarian pundit once put it, we have little to risk by embracing liberty. We might break the chains of bondage, only to be re-enslaved, but the level of crime in a State-free world could hardly exceed that which has been endured throughout the three centuries of American history.

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Thoughts On Nonviolence

By Karl Meyer

What is nonviolence? It is a way of life based on these human beliefs: Human conflicts can be resolved without violence or force; organized social aggression can be faced and turned back effectively without war and without killing anybody; most crime problems can be addressed more effectively without the use of violent methods or punishment or restraint; people well-educated in the use of nonviolent methods will almost always be more effective in human relations than those who use physical threats and weapons.

Commitment to nonviolence requires us to find solutions that address the needs and feelings of all parties. Resorting to violence means that one party will lose and be forced to give up when the other party wins. Nonviolence begins with respect for the needs and feelings of others, and a serious attempt to appreciate their point of view. The methods of nonviolence are communication, negotiation, mediation, arbitration and non-violent forms of protest and resistance, when other forms of communication fail to resolve a conflict. When these methods are used with skill and persistence, most conflicts can be resolved without any party feeling the need to resort to violence. Organized, persistent nonviolent action can overcome oppression and resist aggression more effectively than violent means.

The fact is that all of us use nonviolent methods in most of our human relationships, most of the time. It would be a sorry world if we didn't. What would it be like if we used violence instead of negotiation every time that someone else had something that we wanted? What would it be like if we used violent retaliation every time that someone else did something that obstructed us or angered us? We use nonviolent methods in most of our family disputes. We use it in our schools, our work relationships and our commercial trading transactions. We use it in almost all relationships between communities within the established borders of nations, and in most relations between nations.

Many of us never resort to the explicit use of violence at all. Most others resort to it only in occasional situations.

We carry on most of our activities within a structure of law and customary principles of nonviolent relationship. It may seem that this structure is only held together by the ultimate threat of police force; but, in fact, the fabric of social relationships in families, in groups and in larger communities has always been held together primarily by voluntary assent to common principles of social organization.

Throughout history it has been common to resolve conflicts between nations by warfare and the use of force. Yet even here the majority of relationships have been governed by negotiated agreements, treaties, laws and customs.

Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. did not invent nonviolence. Their instinctive contribution was to show how organized nonviolent action could solve intractable situations of longstanding oppression and conflict. Before them, others believed that these problems could not be solved, or could be solved only by violent revolt.

Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. King showed how we can take the nonviolent methods that we use most of the time in everyday relationships, and develop them as powerful tools to solve the most difficult problems of entrenched oppression and institutional violence.

We are all believers and practitioners of nonviolence in human relationships. The challenge is to extend our belief and our practical skills to more difficult and remote situations of human conflict. Those who really commit themselves to these principles find that they work. Many lives are saved. Destruction is avoided, and everyone benefits as the process develops.

Our politicians often tell us that it is impossible to resolve conflicts without war. The fact is that they don't try hard enough, because it is our lives and our well being that they put on the line when they decide that violence is necessary.

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