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Frontiersman

The Truth Is Within You

October 1997

If This Goes On-

Sam Aurelius Milam III

I see dozens of news items about people who are punished by government without ever having harmed anyone. The leader of the Mountaineer Militia, for example, was convicted of **conspiring** to manufacture and deal in explosives. The conviction wasn't for killing or injuring anyone. There were no victims. The conviction was for **intending** to blow up an FBI fingerprint complex.

> WHEELING, W.Va. (AP) - The leader of the Mountaineer Militia, arrested in an alleged plot to blow up the FBI's fingerprint complex, was convicted of conspiring to manufacture and deal in explosives….
>
> —AP NewsBrief by MARCO LEAVITT, Saturday, Aug. 9, 1997[1]

Punishing people before they've caused any harm is a world-wide trend. In Wiesbaden, Germany, people were arrested recently for being **suspected** neo-Nazis. They weren't arrested for **doing** anything, but because of their **suspected** sympathies and plans for a meeting.

> WIESBADEN, Germany (AP) - At least 140 suspected neo-Nazis were arrested in Germany today to prevent banned memorial gatherings observing the 10th anniversary of the death of Hitler's deputy, Rudolf Hess, police say. Officials say Hess committed suicide in Berlin's Spandau prison on Aug. 17, 1987, but his family claims he was murdered. Hess has become a cult figure among neo-Nazi youths. A police spokeswoman says controls throughout the country are tight with cars and buses carrying suspected radical rightists being checked.
>
> —AP NewsBrief by DAVID GOODMAN, Saturday, Aug. 16, 1997[1]

Israel routinely launches deadly military attacks against **suspected** terrorist strongholds in south Lebanon. The alleged strongholds aren't populated by **proven** terrorists, but by **suspected** terrorists.

> TYRE, Lebanon (AP) - Israeli warplanes today fired at least six missiles on suspected Hezbollah guerrilla bases in south Lebanon, security officials said. It was the fourth Israeli air strike by Israel on Lebanon this week amid escalation of fighting that has left 26 people dead, mostly civilians. The raid came a day after guerrillas detonated a roadside bomb, killing an Israeli-allied militiaman in the southern enclave that Israeli has occupied since 1985. In today's raids, two fighter jets led three attacks on the Shiite Muslim villages of Yatar, Zibquin and Jebal al-Boutom, said the officials, speaking on customary condition of anonymity. There was no immediate word on casualties.
>
> —AP NewsBrief by MARCO LEAVITT, Saturday, Aug. 23, 1997[1]

In Charleston, South Carolina, a man was condemned to prison for **conspiring** to burn a church. He wasn't convicted of burning the church, but of **conspiring** to burn it. The difference is of great importance.

> CHARLESTON, S.C. (AP) - A former Ku Klux Klansman was sentenced to 15 years in federal prison for conspiring to burn a rural black church and a migrant labor camp. Hubert Rowell pleaded guilty last December along with Arthur A. Haley, another former Klan member. Both admitted conspiring in the 1995 burnings of Macedonia Baptist Church and a migrant labor camp, both in Clarendon County about 80 miles north of Charleston. Haley was sentenced earlier this month to 21 1/2 years in prison.
>
> —AP NewsBrief by JEROME MINERVA, Monday, Aug. 25, 1997[1]

The proper test for a conviction is that the accused person actually did some harm, not that he merely intended to do harm. This follows necessarily from the concept of presumed innocence. If there is no victim, then there is no justification for punishment. If the criterion for punishment can be transferred away from the actual infliction of harm to the mere intention to do harm, than it can be transferred even further. Once it is acceptable to condemn a man for merely possessing a bomb, then it is a small increment in the law to condemn him for having materials or tools that could be used to make a bomb — for "conspiring to manufacture and deal in explosives". If that becomes acceptable, then a man can be condemned for merely learning how to build a bomb. After that, it can become a crime to even provide information. That is now the case.

> WHEELING, W.Va. (AP) - A firefighter who gave photographed blueprints of an FBI complex to a militia leader has become the first person to be convicted under a new federal anti-terrorism law. The 1994 law makes it a crime to provide resources to someone planning a terrorist attack. It was intended to prevent terrorist acts, U.S. Attorney William Wilmoth said. Fire Lt. James Rogers, 41, was convicted Monday and faces up to 10 years in prison when he is sentenced. He was acquitted of a conspiracy charge.
>
> —AP NewsBrief by LISA M. COLLINS, Tuesday, Aug. 26, 1997[1]

It appears that today even a librarian could be punished for merely doing her job — providing a book to someone.

If guilt can be transferred away from the person who actually does the harm and imposed upon acts prior the occurrence of actual harm, however threatening such acts may appear to be, then guilt by association is without limit. Eventually, no author will dare to write a book that might be construed as providing any dangerous information at all. No publisher would dare to publish such a book. No librarian would dare to touch it. Such power in the hands of government is far more dangerous than a bomb in the hands of a terrorist.

When a government seeks the power to punish people for their thoughts, plans, or sympathies, however threatening those may appear to be, then that government must be destroyed.

> When any government, or any church for that matter, undertakes to say to its subjects, "This you may not read, this you must not see, this you are forbidden to know," the end result is tyranny and oppression, no matter how holy the motives.
>
> —from *If this Goes On-*, by Robert A. Heinlein

[1] Delivered via the Farcast(TM) business intelligence service <http://www.farcast.com>.

Diverse Definitions of Freedom

by Don J. Cormier

It's all very well to say that one wants to live in a free society, but what a "free society" would be like, in detail, depends on how one defines freedom.

There are diverse and competing definitions of freedom abroad in the world. The only way of judging between them is to examine what type of society they logically imply.

One of the most commonly used dictionaries — "Webster's II New Riverside Dictionary", defines freedom as "The state of being free from constraints". This is vague. It's difficult to imagine a society, based on such a vague concept.

The Unabomber's manifesto provides a definition of freedom which differs from that in the dictionary:

"Freedom means being in control (either as an individual or as a member of a SMALL group) of the life and death issues of one's existence; food, clothing, shelter and defense against whatever threats there may be in one's environment. Freedom means having power, not the power to control other people but the power to control the circumstances of one's own life. One does not have freedom if anyone else (especially a large organization) has power over one, no matter how benevolently, tolerantly and permissively that power may be exercised." (The Unabomber's manifesto, paragraph 94)

This definition is good in that it is detailed and specific. It indicates generally positive qualities.

The problem with this definition is that it is written in absolute terms. If taken literally, it is incompatible with group living, for reasons which I will outline.

Imagine two individuals, living alone on a desert island. No matter how evenly and equally the two individuals are matched, each will have a slight advantage over the other in some areas. To the extent that one individual is stronger than the other, that individual has the ability to influence or limit the weaker individual — at least in some ways. Even if the stronger individual takes no positive steps whatsoever to control the weaker individual, the weaker individual is not free by the terms of the above definition, because the stronger party could decide to act at any time.

A solitary "Robinson Crusoe" living in some wilderness area would enjoy freedom from the interference of other people, but that sort of freedom is not relevant to a discussion of societies. Freedom would become a political problem for Robinson Crusoe when he acquired a neighbor — or a wife.

The Unabomber's definition of freedom could be relevant to group-living situations if it were amended. At this point, for purposes of provoking thought and discussion, I will introduce my own, group-relevant definition of freedom: Freedom means living among people who have agreed to refrain from initiating force or fraud. A society is free to the extent that it's members engage in voluntary, mutually beneficial exchanges.

My proposed definition has enough specificity for an imaginative exploration of it's logical consequences. It implies that freedom in a group context is always limited by the mere existence of the group. It also implies that living in a group context requires respect for the equal rights of other group members. An exploration of these implications would be valuable for libertarian and anarchist thinkers. ∞

Diverse Definitions of Crime

This is an excerpt from a letter that was printed in the San Diego Daily Transcript on Sept. 12, 1997. The letter was written by Joseph Colannino, chairman of the San Diego County Libertarian Party. It was forwarded to the *Frontiersman* by Sir John the Generous. Sir John has a web page at http://www.jwebster.com/.

Judge Larry Sterling laments the fact that "until recently, the state of California hadn't built a new prison for almost 50 years." But why has our prison population exploded? Before 1980 we had less then 20,000 state prisoners. Today the number of state prisoners exceeds 142,000. One need not visit Russian gulags or Chinese interment camps to find out why.

California leads the nation, indeed the world, in per capita incarceration. The problem is not too few prisons, but too many laws that demand jail for trivial offenses. Under "three strikes," a person may be put away for life for stealing a piece of pizza or smoking a joint. No wonder our prison population is soaring. Much of the increase is due to a whole class of nonviolent offenders created by the "drug war." This war on drugs (which we have lost) is the economic engine that powers gang violence and delivers cocaine to our kids. As with the days of Prohibition so it is now — people are once again dying on street corners as gangs battle for distribution territory. The fruit of Prohibition is an increase in usage and potency. This is as true for drugs in the nineties as it was for alcohol in the 1920's. Clearly then, the drug war was designed not to curb drug use, but to build bureaucracies. But can we afford the cost?

With high school graduates pulling down $60,000 a year as prison guards and their powerful union lobbying for more, the cost of Judge Sterling's massive detention program will bankrupt the state. We may debate whether crime will decrease, but the cost to taxpayers is undebatable. Taxes will be sky high and government services will be dramatically reduced. This will only drive the more affluent individuals and businesses out of the state. We who remain will suffer even more.

And consider the tragic damage to nonviolent prisoners (and their families) when they are locked up for victimless crimes. Prison rape is both common and, with the advent of AIDS, often a lingering death sentence with health care paid by the taxpayer.

Where will it end? Logically with three classes of people in the state: prisoners, guards, and tax slaves to pay the upkeep for the first two groups.

Clearly those who commit real crimes … should be locked up for long sentences. But the government's war on victimless crimes (e.g. drugs, prostitution and gambling) only reduces jail space for violent offenders….

With the passage of more than a thousand new state laws a year, we are all criminals of some sort, subject to selective prosecution (or persecution) at the whim of law enforcement. What does it say about a society when even its vehicle code is thicker than the Bible? Should every person who commits a misdemeanor, however insignificant, be behind bars? I think not. Judge Sterling makes a good case for efficiency improvements within the judicial system, but his support of ever more prison building is not the answer. ∞

Letters to the Editor

Hi Sam,

Thought you might enjoy this (see below) if you had not read it before. Hope all is well with you. Things are fine here. Thanks for the Frontiersman. You do good work and service with it.

Love, —Millie; El Granada, California

Excerpt from a recent live radio interview on one of the regional Welsh stations: A female newscaster is interviewing the leader of a Youth club:

Interviewer: So, Mr. Jones, what are you going to do with these children on this adventure holiday?

Jones: We're going to teach them climbing, abseiling, canoeing, archery, shooting...

Interviewer: Shooting! That's a bit irresponsible isn't it?

Jones: I don't see why, they'll be properly supervised on the range.

Interviewer: Don't you admit that this is a terribly dangerous activity to be teaching children?

Jones: I don't see how, we will be teaching them proper range discipline before they even touch a firearm.

Interviewer: But your equipping them to become violent killers.

Jones: Well, you're equipped to be a prostitute but you're not one are you?

Needless to say, the interview was terminated almost immediately.

Hi Sam,

Congratulations on another fine issue. Enjoyed especially "Anarchist Icons", and laughed at the contraceptive jelly article.

That Don Cormier is something else, I always enjoy his writing, and missed him in the previous issue. Will his work be appearing in future issues?

By the way, here's an idea to keep your costs down and increase circulation. Have you considered distributing your newspaper on the WEB? It would greatly decrease your distribution costs! Just an idea.

Hope to hear from you. Thanks and keep up the good work! —Tom; Redwood City, California

I expect that we'll hear more from Mr. Cormier.

I don't know how to distribute on the internet, but I think it's a good idea. I'd like to figure out how to do it. One thing that worries me, however, is if I can force the newsletter format that somebody sees on his computer to exactly match the format of the printed version. I hope to continue the printed version, and it will be the "master" version. Any suggestions —editor

Acknowledgments

- My thanks to Sir Donald the Elusive for paying the production costs of this newsletter.
- My thanks to Lady Jan the Voluptuous for her ongoing editorial assistance and for her countless other efforts in support of this newsletter and of its editor.

—editor

Response to the September Letter From the Editor (an excerpt):

…Your Newsletter is appreciated by me, however, I am not in a position to do much other than use your essays & Newsletter to wake up some of the guys in here (& hope they inform their family). If you quit putting out the newsletter, I, for one, will totally understand! Even though my "wife" is divorcing me, I have my ex wife's assurances that my son will have all your essays as "educational" material as he grows. I thank you! I could wish you were a young man, just starting out as a teacher, teaching what you know now & in a community of youngsters with sparkle in their eyes! Not the almost unsurmountable apathy & delusion we face today. I can remember back in 1960, when I was 10, I told my dad the IRS was "Not Right" & the "Income tax" was a slave tax! Yet, got hoodwinked myself…. I pray I get a chance to try and provide a free country for my son to grow up in and inherit!

…I really like your "Headline" on the address section of your Newsletter! At least the Mailpersons & a few C/O's in here see a witty truthful saying to give them pause! Anyway, I do hope someone could make a Web page for you…. —Eric; State Prison
Tehachapi, California

Eric wants to know when they stopped putting the cent sign on postage stamps. Does anybody know? —editor

Frontiersman

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—Sam Aurelius Milam III, editor

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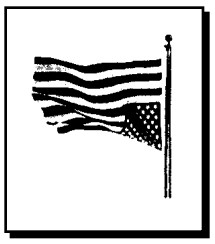

Nation in Distress

Self defense cannot be delegated.

Net Watcher's News

And the Lord spoke to Noah and said: "In six months I'm going to make it rain until the whole earth is covered with water and all the evil people are destroyed. But I want to save a few good people, and two of every kind of living thing on the planet. I am ordering you to build Me an Ark."

And in a flash of lightning he delivered the specifications for an Ark. "OK," said Noah, trembling in fear and fumbling with the blueprints.

"Six months, and it starts to rain," thundered the Lord. "You'd better have my Ark completed, or learn how to swim for a very long time."

And six months passed. The skies began to cloud up and rain began to fall.

The Lord saw that Noah was sitting in his front yard, weeping. And there was no Ark. "Noah," shouted the Lord, "where is my Ark?" A lightning bolt crashed into the ground next to Noah.

"Lord, please forgive me!" begged Noah. "I did my best. But there were big problems. First I had to get a building permit for the Ark construction project, and your plans didn't meet code. So I had to hire an engineer to re-draw the plans. Then I got into a big fight over whether or not the Ark needed a fire sprinkler system. My neighbors objected, claiming I was violating zoning by building the Ark in my front yard, so I had to get a variance from the city planning commission.

Then I had a big problem getting enough wood for the Ark because there was a ban on cutting trees to save the Spotted Owl. I had to convince U.S. Fish and Wildlife that I needed the wood to save the owls. But they wouldn't let me catch any owls. So no owls. Then the carpenters formed a union and went out on strike. I had to negotiate a settlement with the National Labor Relations Board before anyone would pick up a saw or a hammer. Now we have 16 carpenters going on the boat, and still no owls.

Then I started gathering up animals, and got sued by an animal rights group. They objected to me taking only two of each kind. Just when I got the suit dismissed, EPA notified me that I couldn't complete the Ark without filing an environmental impact statement on your proposed flood. They didn't take kindly to the idea that they had no jurisdiction over the conduct of a Supreme Being. Then the Army Corps of Engineers wanted a map of the proposed new flood plain. I sent them a globe.

Right now I'm still trying to resolve a complaint from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission over how many Croatians I'm supposed to hire, the IRS has seized all my assets claiming I'm trying to avoid paying taxes by leaving the country, and I just got a notice from the state about owing some kind of use tax. I really don't think I can finish your Ark for at least another five years," Noah wailed.

The sky began to clear. The sun began to shine. A rainbow arched across the sky. Noah looked up and smiled. "You mean you're not going to destroy the earth?" Noah asked, hopefully.

"No," said the Lord sadly, "Government already has."

—Author Unknown;
Provided by Sir James the Bold

Buck Hunter Shoots Off His Mouth

Dear Buck

Why would any musician in his right mind play Bach on a piano? —Music Lover

Dear Music Lover

Beats me. I thought you could play back only on a tape recorder.