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Frontiersman

The Truth Is Within You

July 1998

Crazy and Quasi Anarchists

— or —

Will the Real Anarchism Please Stand Up?

Don J. Cormier

For the purposes of this discussion, it's necessary to state some definitions:

anarchism: "The doctrine of the abolishment of all forms of government because they are oppressive and undesirable." (Webster's II New Riverside Dictionary, Copyright 1984, Houghton Mifflin Company)

government: "A government is an institution that holds the exclusive power to *enforce* certain rules of social conduct in a given geographical area." (Ayn Rand, in *The Nature of Government*.)

pacifism: "Opposition to war or violence as a way to resolve disputes." (Webster's II New Riverside Dictionary, Copyright 1984, Houghton Mifflin Company)

Some readers may think that providing definitions at the beginning of an article or essay is a waste of time. However, since the following discussion deals largely with the proper definition of words, it seems prudent to build a foundation for understanding.

Consider the case of the word *anarchism*. It would seem to be a simple term. According to the dictionary, it is the doctrine of "No Government". However, the situation is not so simple if one considers the root of the word.

"A" or "An" is a Greek word meaning "without". The "arch" part of the word is taken from a Greek word meaning either ruler or leader, depending on the context. Therefore, it can be argued, (and some people DO argue), that the correct meaning of the word is "without leaders". According to these people, those who use the word in the sense of abolishing all governments are fools because they do not understand the correct meaning of their self-adopted label. (By implication, the editors of the dictionary are included in the "fool" category.)

Obviously, opposition to government and opposition to leadership are different ideas, although their practical application is sometimes the same. "Leadership" is such a broad concept that it's hard to see how it could ever be abolished. People sometimes lead by example, without any deliberate intention of doing so. For people who subscribe to the "leadership" definition, anarchism truly is a crazy, utopian project.

People who subscribe to the "No Government" definition of anarchism would seem to have a more definite, coherent concept. But people are very clever when it

comes to discovering loopholes and sources of confusion in seemingly simple things. The loophole here is the definition of the term *government*.

Within the ranks of self-proclaimed anarchists, there are two major schools of thought concerning the meaning of the word "government". I dub them "The Crazy Anarchists" and "The Quasi-Anarchists".

The Crazy Anarchists accept the definition of government stated above by Ayn Rand. They reject the existence of an institution whose purpose is to enforce social rules within a given geographic area, and envision a society characterized by peaceful cooperation.

Some of these people are pure pacifists. Others assert the existence of a right to self-defence, provided that this right is never delegated to any other person, or group of persons, such as a government.

I call all these people Crazy Anarchists, because it requires an almost crazy optimism to think that people would ever be so harmonious and peaceful as to sustain a society without the organized and delegated use of force. There are few if any historical precedents to support such a notion.

In general, the Quasi Anarchists define government as all organizations called governments which currently exist, or which have existed. This allows them to claim to be against all governments, but also allows them to propose new organizations to enforce social rules, which they do not perceive as governmental.

Most people would seriously question the validity of the definition of government used by the Quasi Anarchists, if only because it's so unimaginative and nonanalytical. Though the Quasi Anarchists seem intellectually deficient, their plans are more pragmatic than those of the Crazy Anarchists, because experience proves that the use of organized violence CAN organize society.

This disagreement in anarchist circles about the concept of government matters because the end results desired by the crazies and the quasies are quite different. If the quasies ever succeed in realizing their social vision, the crazies will oppose it. The quasies will probably be in the odd position of using force to preserve anarchy from anarchists. So — will the real anarchism please stand up!

∞

When your heart is truly pure, you really *do* have the strength of ten. And further, while it is best to have your heart pure with God's love, pure anything will do. Pure honor or pure greed. Pure hate or even pure evil. It is only the contradictions and inner conflicts that weaken a man.

—Father Ignacy Sierpinski
in *The Cross-Time Engineer*, by Leo Frankowski

Trapped by the Safety Net

Sam Aurelius Milam III

Medical services, like most things that people need, are available in limited supply. Whoever provides the services needs to make a living and, reasonably, wants to get paid for what he provides. Therefore, left to themselves, providers tend not to offer services that they can't sell. Most people have limited means, and therefore can't afford all of the medical services that they want. Therefore, a preponderance of the services offered have to be affordable, or they will not be sold. When market forces are allowed to operate, they tend to keep medical services relatively cheap. If expensive services are seldom available for most people, at least the cheap ones are. However, this also causes a perceived inequity. People who can afford more or better medical services get them. People who can't, don't.

A seemingly reasonable answer to this perceived inequity is medical insurance. People voluntarily pool their resources. This provides a reservoir of money that members can use to buy medical services that they wouldn't otherwise be able to afford. However, there are unforeseen consequences.

Prior to the advent of medical insurance, there are (in principle) only two parties to a medical transaction — the party providing the service and the party receiving it. The advent of medical insurance adds a third party. The function of the third party, the insurance company, is to pay the bill. The presence of the third party causes the market to behave differently. The people receiving medical services no longer need to be concerned with cost. They can afford to "buy" any service, however expensive, because the insurance pays for it. Service providers don't need to keep services cheap. They can sell any service, however expensive, because it doesn't matter whether or not the customer can afford it. This encourages an increase in the cost of services that are already available. It also encourages the development of other services that are inherently more expensive.

When only a few people have medical insurance, its influence will be unimportant. However, when the costs of a sufficiently large proportion of medical services are paid by insurance, the costs of the services will no longer be limited by the customers' ability to pay. The costs of medical services will then rise. The increase in medical costs will eventually threaten even the ability of the in-

surance companies to pay. In response, the insurance companies will increase the cost of medical insurance. Eventually, people will find themselves in a situation even worse the original one. Again, they will be unable to afford all of the medical services that they want. Worse yet, they will not be able to afford even the insurance. Since one of the consequences of the widespread use of insurance is to make even the previously cheap services expensive, people will not be able to afford even the services that they would have been able to afford, before the advent of insurance.

There is another consequence of the widespread availability of medical insurance. Ultimately it is a worse consequence. Once the payment of medical bills becomes the responsibility of the insurance companies, the determination of what a customer can afford will no longer be made by the customer. That choice will be transferred to the insurance companies. Thus, not only will people lose access to previously cheap medical services, they will lose their power to choose what they should have.

People ought to have the right to freely associate. They should be able to enter into whatever agreements they believe will benefit them. However, there are some forms of associations and agreements that should probably be avoided. I believe that medical insurance is one of them. With or without insurance, medical services are, ultimately, available in limited supply. With insurance, they are much more expensive. With insurance, people lose their power to determine, within the limits of their own finances, what medical treatment they will have. Instead, such decisions pass to the bureaucracies. The services will still be available. The difference is that, instead of going to people who can afford them, they will go to people who comply with the prerequisites established by the bureaucracies. ¶

It isn't possible to repeal the Law of Supply and Demand, and when it is violated there is always a penalty to pay. —November 1, 1994, *Milam's Notes*
Good intentions are the source of more folly than all other causes put together.

—Star, Empress of the Twenty Universes
in *Glory Road*, by Robert A. Heinlein

Good decisions come from experience. Experience comes from bad decisions. —author unknown

Letters to the Editor

Dear Sam

Don't worry about the flaws in the Constitution. We are well on our way to belonging to the U.N. It owns all our state parks & so many sides of our territory — add to that all the "legal" immigrants with dual citizenship, we are fast becoming a non-nation....

—Shirley; Urbana, Illinois

Hello,

...I enjoyed your article on the recent school shootings. The way that certain groups are using these tragedies for political advantage is tantamount to child abuse.

—Chris Struble, Chairman
Libertarian Party of Idaho

Dear Sam,

The following response to your response to Elliot on page 3 [June issue].

1. People who think for themselves do not by that fact have any more or less influence. You address direction rather than magnitude. The claim seems to be one chiefly designed to enable you to claim that people with whom you disagree are having their thinking done for them by someone else.

2. You are right that it was the 13th Amendment that outlawed slavery and also that the Civil War Amendments (13, 14 & 15) fundamentally changed the constitutional understanding at the point of a gun. I

— continued at the top of page 3 —

disagree, however, that the consequences of that are so dire as to justify refighting the War of the Southern Rebellion.

Equality (the principal idea introduced by the 14th Amendment) is not about result (which would arguably be slavery) but about equal treatment and equal opportunity.

For example, Jackson, Mississippi, is ordered to integrate its municipal swimming pools. Instead, the pools are closed down. No problem, say the Supremes. There is no right to have a swimming pool provided by the government, and a lot of cities have no such thing. But if you have one, it must be open to all.

3. There is no such entity as society unless a working majority of us agree that there is and conduct ourselves as if there is. And that state of affairs exists. There is no such thing as an Internet, either, by your apparent standards--but I bet you get this e-mail.

There was a young woman from Deal
who said "Although pain isn't real,
when I am harassed
and kicked in my ass
I dislike what I fancy I feel!"

4. It is appropriate to call "privileges" rights when others similarly situated in all relevant respects already have them. See, swimming pools. I tried a case involving a place of public accommodation throwing out gay people for dancing with each other. When the jury nailed the bigots, it was reported in the media as "court upholds right to disco." Nonsense. There is no such right. Just a right to equal treatment when similarly situated in all relevant respects. Is that reading of the 14th so hard to live with, or is it that the feds are given the authority to enforce it? (As you point out, such authority did not exist before the Civil War. This, of course, does not mean that the rebels were right and the states could secede outside the context of a con-con.)

—Steve; San Antonio, Texas

1. People who think for themselves are less likely to mindlessly obey government. Whether or not they agree with me is irrelevant. They will still resist the deceptions attempted by government and be more difficult to control. 2. Equality was not the principal idea introduced by the 14th amendment. That amendment defined a citizen as being subject to the jurisdiction of the U.S. government. Jurisdiction means power and control. After that, citizenship was indistinguishable from slavery. That was the principal idea introduced by the 14th Amendment. Furthermore, equality isn't necessarily a good thing. Ants are equal. 3. A government or a corporation is an individual, a party. It has boundaries and identity. It can sue or be sued. Society has none of these things. The opinion of a "working majority" is irrelevant. Society isn't a body politic, no matter how many people incorrectly believe otherwise. Actions taken in the name of society are actually taken by and for the benefit of some individual or group, usually government, using "society" as an excuse. As an entity, society doesn't exist. It has no rights. Only people have rights. 4. It is never appropriate to call a privilege a right. A right is something that is within your ability, for which you don't need permission, and which will be generally or customarily condoned or tolerated. If you need permission, then it isn't a right. It's a privilege. Courts don't grant rights. They grant privileges. —editor

Dear Sam

The Independence Day article is very nice. The Declaration situation was apparently similar to the current European Union. If the current US were such a union of 50 sovereign states, they would certainly be less of a burden to US oppressed citizens, & to the world.

School violence is indeed a symptom of a sick society. The numbers involved are considerably smaller than the CIA orchestrated slaughters in places like Rwanda. Nonetheless, if school shootings become a regular habit of psychopathic US life, it will reflect poorly on the country's reputation. Certainly arming teachers &/or students is not a solution. Libertarians as well as liberals should be able to understand that when pointless violence is a product of social oppression, the only solution is the removal of that oppression, by force if necessary, rather than institutionalizing a state of perpetual violent chaos in "educational" institutions. Similarly, I would agree with you that no education at all would be better than the US system of brainwashing which is called education. But real education is a human thing, & it does indeed take an education system as rotten as this country's to make your anti-public school attitude sound like it might have some justifiable point.

Similarly, it takes a society as rotten as that of the contemporary age to make arguments like Cormier's, in favor of the struggle for survival as superior to a life of culture, seem like it might have a point. Fortunately, Cormier's argument fails on the point so important to us aesthetes: contemporary society is absolutely anti-culture, & that is its primary problem. Only such oppressive barbarism could make animal existence seem superior. Cormier has another basic philosophical flaw: he doesn't practice what he preaches. If he were really a libertarian egoist who believed that animal existence is superior, he would go live in the woods, & not try to help us deluded believers in human civilization. He would not interfere with those trying to express more human values. Both he & we would be happier. That he does so interfere, rather than living the life of the rogue ape he preaches, is transparently anti-libertarian.

Aristotle believed in absolute monarchy, an idea which his pupil Alexander the Great used to justify his own attempt to become the solitary master of the world. Who knows how far he would have succeeded if he had not been struck down by cosmic forces in his early 30's? What if he had lived to be 80 or more, like Stalin? The monarchic concept of Aristotle, followed by Alexander, Julius Caesar in destroying the Roman Republic & setting up the tyrannical Empire, giving power to psychopaths like Nero, Domitian, & Heliogabalus, & also preached by Dante, would seem to be the furthest thing from libertarianism. And Aristotle's belief in the oppression of women was much in accordance with his tyrannical political philosophy. Plato's Republic is much more humanistic, & included social, economic, & political equality for women. —Elliot; N. Merrick, New York

1. I don't oppose public schools. I oppose tax supported schools and mandatory attendance requirements. 2. Why should the rights of women be the same as the rights of men? The belief that they are isn't a law of nature. It's an assumption. As such, it should not be coercively imposed by legislation. Rights do not arise from legislation, but from custom and exercise. —editor



Nation in Distress

Don't steal. The government doesn't like competition.



Buck Hunter Shoots Off His Mouth

Dear Buck

What do you think of the Starr investigations, in Washington D.C.?
—Disgusted

Dear Disgusted

I didn't know that there were any astronomers in Washington D.C.

Sesame Suite

Hermit the Frog: Hey Priggy!

Ms Priggy: Yes, Hermie?

Hermie: Why did the feminist stare at the can of frozen orange juice?

Priggy: Rrrrrr!

Hermie: Because it said "concentrate". He he he — uh....

Priggy: Haayeeeee — YAH!

Hermie: Whap! Oof! Thump!

Sesame Suite is a production of the Children's Tunnelvision Workshop

Frontiersman

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- Police Begin Campaign to Run Down Jaywalkers
- Safety Experts Say School Bus Passengers Should Be Belted
- Drunk Gets Nine Months in Violin Case
- Survivor of Siamese Twins Joins Parents

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—editor

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—Sam Aurelius Milam III, editor