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Frontiersman

The Truth Is Within You

August 1998

Anarcho-Feudalism is not an Oxymoron base their opposition to governments on a moral rejection of the use of violence to resolve disputes.

Don J. Cormier

Let's begin by stating some definitions:

Anarchism: The doctrine of the abolishment of all forms of government because they are oppressive and undesirable.

Feudalism: A medieval European political and economic system based on vassalage.

Pacifism: Opposition to war or violence as a way to resolve disputes.

These definitions are taken from Webster's II New Riverside Dictionary, copyright 1984, Houghton Mifflin Company. I do not assert that these definitions are philosophically perfect, merely that they are common.

Reasoning from these definitions, we see several things.

Pacifists, who believe that it is wrong to use violence to resolve disputes, are anarchists by default because governments rely on the use of violence to resolve disputes.

Anarchists oppose government, and since governments rely on the use of force to resolve disputes, one might assume that anarchists are pacifists by default, but this is only partly true. Many anarchists do not

Anarchists who accept violence have a difficult time explaining on what grounds they reject government in itself. They tend to define government in very concrete terms, as though the organizations called governments which currently exist are the only possible ways in which government could exist, and that if these were wiped out, nothing else could arise which could be construed as a government.

Another interesting observation is that anarchists who embrace violence are often hyphenated anarchists, such as the anarcho-syndicalists and the anarcho-capitalists. The actual mechanisms which various hyphenated anarchists envision vary, but they have in common the use of force to structure their proposed societies. They propose police which they don't call police, and laws which they don't call laws.

Taking this trend of thought one step farther, one could imagine anarcho-feudalism. Presumably, such a variation would bear little or no resemblance to historical feudalism, because the "anarchist" part of the word would have to be justified in some way, but the possibilities are fascinating. Just imagine the Anarchist Knights of the Round Table. ∞

Does the Vote Justify the Result?

Sam Aurelius Milam III

It hasn't been proven, but only alleged, that large-scale democracy is a good idea. An examination of the current situation seems to suggest that it isn't. After two centuries of escalating democracy, our rights have degenerated into privileges. We have a lot of permission, but no freedom. Most people don't even know the difference. It has all happened in response to the instructions of the voters, or at least with their cooperation. As practiced in the USA today, democracy appears to be nothing more than a handy way to legitimize the exercise of unlimited power. This appears to be an inevitable consequence of large-scale democracy.

I suggest that a democracy should never be larger than a community. If the political unit is large enough that the people can't all know each other and vote by a show of hands, then it's too large to be a democracy. It would be better for any such large political unit to be a federation of small politically independent democratic

communities. Failing that, even a monarchy would probably accommodate more liberty than a large-scale democracy. Remember, rights don't come from government, but from the will of the people. Therefore, the form of government doesn't guarantee rights. It only influences the ways in which they might be violated. ☞

Show And Tell

Sam Aurelius Milam III

How many times have you been required by a policeman, out on the road, to show your driver's license to prove that you're a qualified driver? The answer is probably "seldom" or "never". On the other hand, how many times have you been required by someone who wasn't a policeman, when you were not out on the road, to show your driver's license to verify your identity. The answer is probably "hundreds of times". It doesn't take much to figure out what that means. It means that it isn't a drivers license. It's a national ID card. They call it a driver's license to deceive us into using it. ☞

Smitten With Embarrassment Department (Seldom Used)

Last month, I misread and misprinted a letter to the editor. I printed, "It owns all our state parks & so many sides of our territory...." I should have printed, "It owns all our state parks & so many miles of our territory...." My apologies to Shirley, of Urbana, Illinois.

—editor

Letters to the Editor

Sam

.... I especially enjoyed July's [news]letter....

—Steve; Fremont, California

Dear Sam,

Once more on the principal idea introduced into the Constitution by the 14th Amendment, and I still say it was equality. After that stirring Jeffersonian discourse on equality in the Declaration of Independence, we heard no more about it until after the Civil War.

You claim that the 14th gave the US government, for the first time, "jurisdiction" over citizens. I am puzzled by this claim. Conscription existed before and during the Civil War without any 14th Amendment, and as long as the government has all the jurisdiction it needs to get you killed, I am not sure what could be added. Some rights of yours could, of course, be subtracted, and were: the right of private citizens to practice racial discrimination in public dealings. They of course retain that right in private dealings.

It is a fine point to say courts don't grant rights. We "recognize" rights which may indeed be pre-existing, but if those rights do not find their way somehow into our laws or founding documents you will have to travel to the church rather than the courthouse to get them granted, recognized, vindicated, or over easy with a side of bacon.

Your only challenge to my implicit assertion that equality is an important value was to assert that ants are equal. For the record, they are not. WORKER or SOLDIER ants are equal.

But even if ants were in fact equal, I am not sure how that supplies a rationale for allowing the government to treat two citizens differently when they are similarly situated in all relevant respects. Most Americans, and most of your readers, would agree with this proposition. The disagreement comes in defining "similarly situated in all relevant respects," not in whether equality is a good idea.

I like liberty, too, but I will pass on fraternity as a principle of government. Sorority might be worth a try.

—Steve; San Antonio, Texas

*Any legislatively imposed jurisdiction that might have existed prior to the 14th Amendment was indeed obnoxious. However, so far as I'm aware, the 14th Amendment was the first time that a U.S. citizen was **constitutionally** defined as a slave. I expect that those prior jurisdictions were probably imposed by the states, not by the federal government. I also believe that a constitutional definition of slavery is more important than a legislative one.*

The most effective way for a government to achieve control over a population is to enact legislation telling people that they are "allowed" to exercise their rights. People will accept such legislation because they erroneously believe that they are being protected by it. However, when a pre-

viously existing right becomes enacted into legislation, then it is no longer a right. It is regulated behavior — a privilege. The jurisdiction over certain behavior, once established, can restrict the behavior as easily as allow it. It is the same jurisdiction, whether it is used to allow or to restrict the behavior.

*People have consistently come to rely upon statutes, constitutions, governments and courts as the source of their "rights". The Bill of Rights is the best example. People have come to believe that the **only** rights they have are those which can be construed from the Bill of Rights. That document has become the main, if not the only, judicially admissible defense of "constitutional rights", and has denied by omission more rights than it has preserved. Indeed, in my opinion, it hasn't preserved any rights at all. Instead of invoking the Bill of Rights, people ought to have defended their rights as existing beyond the purview of government. This reliance upon the "demarcation on parchment", to quote James Madison, has been fatal to liberty. Printed copies of my essays on this matter are available upon request. Some of them are posted on The Pharos Connection. There isn't space for them here.*

The test that rights depend upon whether or not people are "similarly situated in all relevant respects" fails not only on the point of what is relevant, but also on the point of who gets to decide. To use your example from last month, many people might believe that a homosexual couple dancing at a disco is very differently situated in a very relevant respect from a heterosexual couple dancing at the same disco. The truth is, however, that the test you recommend allows any group of evangelists that can gain control of the political process to decide what is relevant. They can then use the government as a weapon to regulate "rights" for everyone else. This is a serious defect of democracy, and an excellent reason why we should all realize that rights don't come from government. They come from custom and exercise.

With regard to the ants, I believe that a human population consisting of worker people, soldier people, a few studs, and a queen, would be unacceptable.

—editor

Dear Sam

I don't know how valid your categorization of crazy anarchists & quasi-anarchists is. It does bring up some interesting points. Traditionally, those who envisioned a society characterized by peaceful cooperation, believed that this state of society must be brought about by violence - by the violent overthrow of the government. In the 19th century, the saintly Kropotkin advocated violence, because he was so outraged by the injustices of contemporary governments, both democratic & otherwise. If today's advocates of a society of peaceful cooperation, are also advocating peaceful means, this is very likely the benign influence of the CIA in radical circles. A question is: What do you mean by "new organizations to enforce social rules."? The Kropotkinites advocated unions as the means to peaceful cooperation. Unions would (violently) take over factories & other means of production, & in the post-revolutionary society, they would enforce social rules among their members. They would also defend the rights of their members. They, as human beings, would define their own rights for themselves. The whole point of revolutions is that one does not accept irrational custom & taboo as the source of

— continued at the top of page 3 —

rights. I thought Jefferson made that clear in the Declaration. Unions are conceived of as voluntary associations, such as you yourself advocate. Those who reject anarchism, do not believe that a society of peaceful co-operation can be created without political means, even with the use of violence - that politics must be fought by political means. This was the argument of Marx against Kropotkin; & today, the same idea has led some libertarians to abandon anarchism for libertarian political parties, such as Mr. Struble; & it's nice that the Frontiersman is starting to attract influential people within the system, like Struble, & Steve of San Antonio, as well as us underground intelligentsia.

The people of the US will not accept a society (or whatnot) where the free market reins in health care (or education) - where the rich receive millions of dollars worth of health care, while tens of millions have their lives shortened miserably by lack of health care. In a society of very rich & very poor, ten doctors would be happy to serve one very rich man, while 99 die, rather than have nine doctors serving ten poor people each, especially if they were Randian doctors. This is the problem with your & Rand's free market logic. As health care grows more high tech & expensive, more & more tens of millions cannot afford health care. The people of the US are not happy, & they will grow more unhappy. The single payer plan is the easiest solution at this point, if one considers both objective practicality, & subjective do-ability (what US "society" is almost ready for). This is one of the areas where there simply is no rational argument against the need for social planning.

I do wish that someone would explain, to well-intentioned but deluded people like Shirley, that the US runs the UN, & not vice versa. As for dual citizenship leading to less nationalism, I would think libertarians would applaud that.

Caramba! With all your definitions, you might say what the Amendment you're referring to is about. Not all of us anti-democrats can quote the Constitution chapter & verse. Anyway, Article XIV says: "All persons born or naturalized in the US, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens....." not: all persons shall be citizens in order that they may be subject. The idea is that, if "society" imposed laws, those subject to the laws shall have certain equal rights. Anything else would be tantamount to slavery; for all, if they did not have such rights; or for some, if they were arbitrarily excluded from citizenship & its rights, for skin color, for example. The problem is not in the concept, but in that it isn't practiced, because an enslaved population doesn't insist that it be practiced. Under capitalist democracy, the state can provide public swimming pools for all or for none. This is better than a tyrannical state which provided pools only for the elite, but not as good as a platonic state (socialist? fascists?) which would provide pools for all, & if the racists choose not to use them, that is their freedom. In ancient Rome, senators were content to rub elbows with slaves in the public baths. The human race waits for Mississippi to become so enlightened.

There's something peculiar about going to dictionaries for political definitions rather than to sources in the history of political philosophy. In fact, you warp things in

your favor when you use Webster's or Rand's definitions, but never Plato's, Rousseau's, or Marx's. Political philosophy is not a struggle between Webster, Rand, & various documents of US politics (Declaration, Articles of Confederation, Constitution), & nothing else. In our society of free expression, where morons can argue politics on Oprah, but you & I cannot, the writings of Kropotkin & Hitler (both Darwinians strangely enough), & many other major influences in the history of politics, are not in print, nor is Random House likely to print one of our books any time soon, while academic hacks continue to publish that they may not perish. Nonetheless, Plato's Republic, Rousseau's Social Contract, & Marx's Communist Manifesto do give many of the basic concepts of fascist, democratic, & socialist philosophy, & it seems chaotic, rather than anarchistic, to argue against major political ideas, without first familiarizing oneself with them. One could read all three of these books, in less time than it takes to write three 50 page essays on the Articles of Confederation. It happens that Plato agreed with you about the lesser abilities of women, but insisted that they have equal political & social rights, in order to maximize their potential, & their service to a class society. Women should be given equal educational opportunities, & equal employment opportunities. Because Plato's Republic is a class society, women were to be permitted to go as high up the social structure as their abilities allowed. Plato was insistent that birth & wealth should not determine one's place in society, nor should the mere fact of being female.

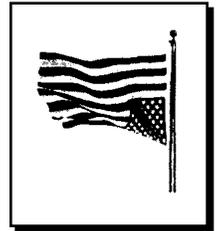
—Elliot; N. Merrick, N.Y.

Who says custom is irrational? Custom is the accumulation from antiquity of things that have worked. It becomes irrational only if it becomes dogmatic. The two necessary ingredients of a viable community are custom and courtesy. Custom provides the needed stability and courtesy allows the "elbow-room" for innovative behavior, thereby preventing custom from becoming dogmatic.

There's nothing wrong with people who can afford medical care getting all they can afford. With regard to the "poor", sick people should certainly have a right to seek medical treatment. I don't know the best answer to the problem of providing medical care to people who can't afford it. However, I do know that the right to seek a thing isn't the same as the right to have the thing. The right to have it suggests that everybody else has an obligation to provide it. Just because a person needs treatment doesn't necessarily mean that he should be able to force other people to provide it for him. Such a presumption will cause the most unhealthy person in the country to be the most powerful dictator and the most productive and healthy people to be the most abject servants. Government, of course, would be in charge of the process.

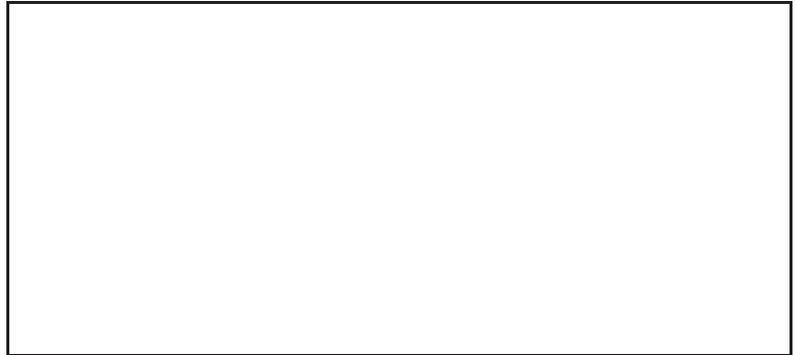
It doesn't matter whether you read the 14th Amendment backwards or forwards. A citizen is still subject to the jurisdiction of the United States. If citizenship was voluntary, it wouldn't matter. However, the problem isn't people being excluded from citizenship. The problem is people being coerced into it. The government prevents people from functioning unless they're authorized to do so, and citizenship is the primary form of authorization. Therefore, it's effectively mandatory. Because of my refusal to be a citizen, I can't work, drive, use the banks, publish a book, start a business, own a car, etc.

—editor



Nation in Distress

It isn't ethnic cleansing. It's ethnic killing.



Buck Hunter Shoots Off His Mouth

Dear Buck

I'm now qualified as a crop duster. What's the best thing to spray for if I want to make a lot of money?

—Ready to Fly

Dear Ready to Fly
Spray for cash.

Sesame Suite

Bernie: Hey Burt!

Burt: I thought they got rid of you.

Bernie: Who's bigger? Mr. Bigger or Mr. Bigger's baby?

Burt: Do I have to listen to this?

Bernie: Mr. Bigger's baby! He's a little bigger!

Burt: That's really stupid.

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

More Funny Headlines

Forwarded by Sir John the Generous. Supposedly, these headlines actually appeared in real publications.

- Farmer Bill Dies in House
- Is There a Ring of Debris around Uranus?
- Stud Tires Out
- Prostitutes Appeal to Pope

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—editor

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—Sam Aurelius Milam III, editor