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Frontiersman

Facing the truth, however great the cost.
July 2004

Terminal Condition

Sam Aurelius Milam III

No human condition endures forever, with the corollary that the more complicated such a condition, the greater its susceptibility to change. —from *the Last Castle*

by Jack Vance

Imagine a juggler. Imagine that he's on stage, in front of an audience. Imagine that he's juggling eggs.

Off stage, out of sight of the audience, there is a man with a big basket of eggs. Every so often, the man off stage throws an egg at the juggler. When that happens, the juggler has to catch the new egg and add it to the ones that he's juggling. Every time he adds an egg to his act, he has to throw the eggs harder and higher, to keep them going. Every time he has to catch a new egg, his act gets harder.

To the audience, the increment of difficulty with each new egg might not be obvious, especially if the juggler doesn't want to appear stressed. Maybe he just keeps smiling.

Intolerable in Any Denomination

Sam Aurelius Milam III

According to the K-House e-news for June 1, 2004, the Muslims in Hamtramck, Michigan, at the local al-Islah mosque, intend to broadcast their call to prayer over loudspeakers. The city council has voted to alter Hamtramck's noise ordinance so that the call to prayer, normally made 5 times a day, will be considered legal.

I've complained a lot about Christians who force Christian doctrine into the awareness of people who don't share it. Displays of the Ten Commandments in public places are one of my pet peeves. However, what the Muslims in Hamtramck, Michigan intend to do is even worse. A plaque bearing the Ten Commandments is visual. At least someone who objects to it can try not to look. An audio announcement is far more intrusive. You can't look away

The man off stage just keeps throwing eggs at the juggler. The juggler just keeps working harder and harder. He keeps throwing the eggs higher and higher. Even if he misses an egg occasionally, he can still keep juggling. However, every time he misses an egg, there's another slick place on the floor. When his assistant tries to clean up the floor, she just gets in his way. Every time an egg hits the juggler in the face, his vision might become a little more blurred. Every time an egg breaks in his hand, his grip will become a little more slippery. Meanwhile, the assistant, trying to help, just keeps getting in the way. While the audience is enjoying the act, the situation is becoming more desperate. It can't go on forever. The appearance of dynamic stability is a lie. The unending growth is unsustainable. Such a situation cannot remain under control forever. No matter how good the juggler is, eventually he's going to drop the eggs.

That is the U.S. economy. ¶

from a sound. Attendance in a public place might, theoretically, be voluntary. However, when a loud noise is broadcast in a neighborhood, there isn't anything voluntary about listening to it.

I oppose the imposition of a belief system onto people who don't share it, whether it's Christianity, Islam, vegetarianism, or anything else. It seems that Muslim evangelism is just as obnoxious as the Christian variety. ¶

Stray Thoughts

Sam Aurelius Milam III

Think Of It As Evolution In Action — I'm tired of having "the children" used as an excuse for why I have to put up with something stupid. Let's repeal all of the "child-safe" crap and let the children learn to be careful while they're growing up, if they can, like I did. There are too many stupid people in the world already. ¶

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Senate Passes Hate Crimes Legislation

K-House eNews for June 22, 2004, <http://www.khouse.org/>

Last week, the U.S. Senate again passed a bill that seeks to add “sexual orientation, gender, and disabilities” to existing legislation against hate crimes. Senator Edward Kennedy has worked for years to push his “Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act” through, and the Senate voted 65/33 to add it to the defense spending bill for next year. Unfortunately, this hate crimes bill threatens the equal rights of all Americans.

A majority of states have some form of hate crimes legislation in place to protect people from violent crimes based on bigotry or prejudice. However, this legislation seeks to make hate crimes a federal issue, forcing on all the states the potential for federal interference in local criminal matters. The bill also forces the judicial system to prosecute criminals for potential “hate crime” motives, and not simply for the crime itself. The result is a form of “thought police” — which goes against the philosophical foundation on which America was built.

In seeking to add “sexual orientation, gender, and disabilities” to the list of protected people, Kennedy and co-sponsor Gordon Smith (R-OR) seek to elevate what are often life-style decisions to a position of special protection. While persons with disabilities generally cannot help the position they are in, people can decide whether or not to participate in the homosexual lifestyle. The use of the term “gender” rather than the biological term “sex” also implies choice, as it covers the category of “transgendered,” which includes transsexuals and transvestites.

Human beings are valuable, regardless of any characteristics that cause people to perceive them as “different” or “less than”. Every person has been uniquely created by God, and God put such great worth on human beings that He sent His Son to die for them. Committing crimes against other people out of prejudicial hatred is always reprehensible.

Unfortunately, in the zeal to protect people from hatred, there has been a failure to hold an equal standard among all Americans when applying hate crimes laws in the past. White, Black, Hispanic, Native American and Asian forms of prejudice are all wrong and should be dealt with equally. But, in racially divided America, white people are far more likely to be prosecuted for hate crimes than are people from ‘minority’ groups. Racially motivated attacks against black people are more likely to receive

media attention than racially motivated attacks against white people. So, while hate crimes legislation makes an effort to condemn racism and other forms of prejudice, there is in reality a prejudice in the very justice system purporting to condemn prejudice.

As efforts are made to add gender and sexual orientation to the list protected by Hate Crimes legislation, there is already guaranteed to be a lack of even-handedness in the prosecution and media portrayal of hate crimes in these areas as well. For instance, men who beat women are much easier to prosecute than women who hate and attack men. Everybody has heard of Matthew Shepard, a gay college student who was beaten to death. However, few have heard of Jeffrey Curley, a 10-year-old boy murdered by two gay men after rejecting their sexual advances. Jeffrey’s father, Robert Curley, found little support from community leaders after the death of his son.

Beyond these questions, there is a problem in trying to separate ‘hate crimes’ from other crimes. If a disabled person is beaten and robbed, what efforts will the jury have to go through to determine whether the attack was based on prejudice or not? The assault should be prosecuted severely, whether or not the criminal “hates” disabled people.

Violent crime is punishable under current legislation, and all such crimes can be considered “hate” crimes. Even without federal hate crimes legislation in place, Matthew Shepard’s murderers were given back-to-back life sentences. To designate certain crimes as worse than others because they are motivated by a specific type of hate opens up a world of confusion and of abuse of the system. It also devalues the loss and damage done to people who are simply the victims of ‘normal’ violent crimes. If a man is attacked, humiliated and beaten by a person of his own race, gender, or religious affiliation, his attackers are just as guilty of a hate crime as those who would have attacked him for legally defined hatefulness.

Justice is supposed to be blind and impartial, weighing each case without consideration of whether the criminals or victims are wealthy or poor, black or white, educated or not. While this may not be reality, we should strive to encourage legislation that truly is impartial and unbiased, that treats every human being equally under the law — and avoid legislation that continues to divide our nation along racial or ethnic or gender lines. ∞

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Letters to the Editor

Bush on Chalabi: Oi, vey!

I just saw George Bush in the sorriest looking performance of his Presidency. The Daily Show had clips of him trying to verbally distance himself from his boy Ahmed Chalabi. He practically said, "Chalabi, who?" Then they showed another clip of Chalabi sitting right behind Laura at the Inaugural. Oops.

Bush is a really competent liar, but he doesn't do embarrassing lies very well. He looked positively ill. At least Reagan would have had the guts to say, "Yes, we trusted the SOB, but he screwed us royal."
—John C.

Hi Sam!

Just a quick comment on "natural rights" — The term is often used by philosophers to indicate a theory by which rights are thought to be inherent in human nature. According to this theory, rights pre-exist in some metaphysical sense, and are waiting to be discovered by human reason. These rights are said to have as much empirical validity as the law of gravity, or any other scientific discovery. The big problem with this theory is that its terms are completely subjective and biased by context. There is as yet no agreement on the precise description of human nature and, hence, no agreement on what specific rights are "inherent" in that nature. Also, if these rights are somehow inherent in human nature, why is it that we don't all know them from birth? The natural rights theory came from medieval scholastic philosophy. In the context of religious thought, the idea makes some sense if you accept on faith that God has granted us all certain rights. However, the materialist philosophers of the enlightenment wrenched the idea out of context, assuming that the terms were obvious to common sense, but failing to see that different cultures would change the definitions. Anyway, I just thought you might be interested in a little side bar info.
—Sir Donald the Elusive

The philosophers to whom you refer are confusing rights with abilities. While abilities are inherent in human nature, rights are not. Abilities are discovered. Rights are defined.
—editor

Hi Sam,

... Thank you for your thoughts, expressions and efforts to put the ideas out there/here.

Sincerely,
—Millie; Baltimore, Maryland

Ronnie's gone.

I can't say he was my favorite President of all time. He was an authoritarian and a plutocrat and he was up to his hips in blood — the blood of tens, maybe hundreds, of thousands of innocent peasants murdered in the proxy wars he bankrolled in the 1980s, in Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Angola and Mozambique. He also married the genial talk with the hard hearted walk, and engineered the upward transfer of wealth from working people to the rich that has since characterized the Republican Party. Nonetheless, I'll miss him. He was savvy. There was a core of decency about him and he was in many ways a straight shooter. He was willing to admit when he was wrong. To quote him at his best, "Whatever else history may say about me when I am gone, I hope it will record that I appealed to your best hopes, not your worst fears, to your confidence, rather than your doubts." Compare that with the tin horn knock off who sits in the White House today. I'd swap those two in a minute.

O tempora! O mores!

—John C.

Dear Sam

... The weekly speeches by BUSH are sickening! As the taxpayers "free" Iraq, Americans are more & more tyrannized and enslaved!! Do people really refuse to see the hypocrisy? This is NOT leadership by EXAMPLE, it is out & out doublespeak. BUSH has no concern for the American People....

... This place is only going to get worse due to the 3-strikes law and when the "non-violent" cases get released when the 3-strikes initiative passes in November, all that will be left are the "violent" ones! I do not look forward to that & believe that everyone should be required to get a gun, let all prisoners loose & for 1 year let God sort it out! Those who want to violate others' rights — die! No trials against the people at all!! Why put someone on trial for killing Jesse James? One day CA taxpayers will wake up!! Maybe not!?!
—an inmate

Forwarded by Sir James the Bold

"America is at that awkward stage; it's too late to work within the system, but too early to shoot the bastards."
—Claire Wolfe, 1995

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Nation in Distress

If the USA must become indistinguishable from the enemy in order to defeat the enemy, then I think that a simple surrender to the enemy would be more cost effective, less destructive, and more honest.



Acknowledgments

My thanks to the following: Sir James the Bold, SantaClara Bob, Lady Jan the Voluptuous, Millie, of Baltimore, Maryland, Sir Donald the Elusive, and Eric, of Soledad, California.

—editor

Buck Hunter Shoots Off His Mouth

Dear Buck

I've been studying for so long that I think I'll just go ahead and get a Ph.D. Where do you think is a good place to get one?

—Student

Dear Student

I've dug many a post hole in my time, and I never saw a better post hole digger than the ones that they sell down ta tha lumber yard.

Frontiersman

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Some Benefits of Being Old

Original Source Unknown. Forwarded by Don G.

- You sing along with the elevator music.
- Your eyes won't get much worse.
- Your joints are more accurate weather predictors than the National Weather Service.
- Your secrets are safe with your friends because they can't remember them either.
- Your supply of brain cells is finally down to a manageable size. ∞

Signs Found in Kitchens

Original Source Unknown. Forwarded by Don G.

- A clean kitchen is a sign of a misspent Life.
- My next house will not have a kitchen — just vending machines. ∞

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—Sam Aurelius Milam III, editor

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