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Frontiersman

Facing the truth, however great the cost.

September 2012

To Be or Not To Be

Carl Watner

By institutionalizing their monopolistic controls over all geographic areas on this planet, governments have transformed the world into a vast prison system from which there is no escape.

This article was prompted by thoughts of a trip abroad and by my perusal of the “Application For A U.S. Passport”, Department of State Form DS-11. On page one of that form, the applicant is asked to “declare under penalty of perjury” that “I am a citizen ... of the United States ...”

Can I, as a voluntarist, make that declaration? Can you?

First of all, what does it mean to be a citizen? What are the pros and cons of citizenship? Are they of any consequence?

The word ‘citizen’ is of Anglo-Norman and Old French origin and in the context of this article means “a member of the State.” From the perspective of the United States government, every person born within the United States has these basic duties:

- To serve in the military, if drafted;
- To pay taxes on his or her worldwide income;
- To serve as a juror and appear as a witness when subpoenaed by a court;
- To obey all the legislation promulgated by local, state, and federal governments.

In return, the United States government’s primary duty towards its citizens is that of providing ‘protection’ from domestic criminals and foreign enemies. Federal, state, and local governments also provide courts, roads, postal delivery, social services, and numerous other entitlements to those living within their jurisdictions. They generally do a poor job of providing such ‘services’ and assume no responsibility for their failures.

The main problem with government, as voluntarists see it, is that the State is a criminal organization. It claims sovereignty over a certain geographical area. Within that zone, it wants everyone to become at least partially re-

sponsible for its crimes by making them citizens. It enforces a compulsory monopoly on defense (police, legislation and courts, and the armed forces), such that individual property owners may not decline its services or employ other agencies to provide the defense services they would prefer. To fund these monopolies, it collects compulsory levies known as taxes and operates a fiat money system with a central bank and legal tender legislation. According to the government, a person may not decline to fulfill his or her obligations to the State. Such a person will be fined, arrested, and/or jailed, and probably held in “contempt” if government agents discover that he or she is not satisfactorily doing what is required in fulfilling the government’s mandates. In short, the State is an invasive institution because its existence rests on the initiation of coercion.

One of the ‘services’ provided by the United States government is that of issuing passports and providing consular protection to those traveling outside of the United States. Voluntarists also object to the whole concept of government passports. To wit,

- They are government documents.
- They are generally required as a prerequisite to leaving the country.
- They are generally required as a prerequisite to re-entering the country.
- They allow the government to track where you have been.
- They are unnecessary.

For much of American history, with the exceptions of the War Between the States and the First and Second World Wars, no passport requirements existed. It was not until 1978 that it was made “illegal [for a U.S. citizen] to enter or depart the United States without” a passport.¹

This is not to deny that there might be travel documents issued by private organizations in a free society. Some travelers might consider passports to be an essential part of life, but providing them need not be done by a government agency. As I discussed in my article, →

¹ Wikipedia, article [United States passport](#)

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The Exit Option, passports at one time were issued by notaries and even by peddlers. Furthermore, there has never been a requirement to have a passport when traveling within the United States, for example, from the East coast to the West coast. That being the case, why should there be a requirement to have a passport when traveling from El Paso, Texas to Ciudad Juarez, Mexico or from Niagara Falls, New York to Niagara Falls, Ontario? By extension, voluntaryist logic questions why there should be any political boundaries at all.

The whole purpose of government passports is to help the government to exercise control over its citizens, whether within or outside of the United States, and to generate revenue for itself while doing so.

This leads to the next question. Who might be citizens of the United States?

Since many people reading this article are native-born Americans, I will discuss only the concept of birthright citizenship. This refers to people who were born within the geographical confines of the United States. It harks back to the old English common law which held that “birth and [political] allegiance go together.”² Citizenship rules can be very complicated so, for simplicity’s sake, I will confine the discussion of birthright citizenship to those born within the United States of parents who, themselves, were born within the United States.

Generally, according to government interpretation, a person born within the United States is a citizen of the United States, regardless of that person’s desire. You become a citizen at birth, not when you reach adulthood, at age 18 or 21. You do not consent to become a citizen. You do not have any choice in the matter. You are simply designated a citizen! If you wish to divest yourself of that status, then you must leave the country and formally renounce your citizenship before a United States consular official outside of the United States. If you do this for the reason of not wanting to pay taxes to the United States government, then you are still obligated to pay those taxes for another ten years from the date of your renunciation. Jeff Knaebel, who immolated himself in India in 2011, discovered that he could not divest himself of his United States citizenship without assuming Indian citizenship, a fact that discon-

certed him greatly. All political governments and international regulations discourage statelessness, which is what one becomes when one renounces one’s birthright citizenship and refuses to assume citizenship of another country.³ The fact is that all people are born stateless. They certainly have not consented to become a member of any government merely by being born. If a government can unilaterally impose citizenship, then it has already assumed an arbitrary jurisdiction over peoples’ bodies. Perhaps that is why the Jewish zealots said that taxation, a consequence of citizenship, was no better than an introduction to slavery. If the government can assert its control over you due to the fact that you were born in an area that it claims to control, then it is simply a matter of grace — on its part — as to what it allows you to do, to earn, and to keep from your efforts.

In truth and in good conscience, and as a voluntaryist, I cannot affirm that I am a citizen of the United States. Why so? I don’t want to give my sanction to the United States government. I do not wish to support it financially. I do not wish to participate in political elections. I object to the forced collection of taxes because taxes are a euphemism for stealing. I do not want to be responsible for any of the actions of the United States government. Is there not a link between the crimes of the United States government and the citizens who compose it, those who pay their taxes, who vote in elections, and who serve in its armed forces? This is not to say, however, that I do not want to be a vibrant participant in the voluntary sector of the community within which I live. Communities have always existed before governments, and there are many peaceful ways of providing for the demands of society in the absence of the State, such as private business activity, co-operative societies, religiously supported institutions, and philanthropic efforts, to name just a few.

So what does it mean to be a United States citizen? Is a United States citizen a slave of his government? A slave is a person who is “the property of another,” a person who is “bound to absolute obedience.” The status of a slave is not a matter of choice. A slave has the major decisions of his or her life made by his or →

2 *Wikipedia*, article [Birthright citizenship in the United States](#), sub-section *English common law*

3 I prefer to think of it as being sovereign rather than as being stateless. — editor

her owner. Must a citizen fight in wars declared by the United States government? Must a citizen risk his or her life to defend it? Must a citizen kill those whom the government labels “enemies”? Must a citizen support the United States government by paying its tax bills? Is there any limit to the amount of tax that the government might demand? Must a citizen be forced against his or her will to serve as a juror or as a witness in criminal or civil legal proceedings? And finally, must a citizen obey the government’s statutes, many of which are insane, insane, or simply against his or her conscience?⁴

The government’s answers to these questions are obviously, “Yes,” though a person might choose to say “No,” and refuse to follow its orders. Ultimately, if enough of us speak out and say “No,” the government will lose its legitimacy. The United States government can call me anything it wants, but that does not make it so. It can label me a United States citizen, but it forgets that I have a say in the matter. In my own mind and in my own person I refuse

4 Mr. Watner’s observations are completely consistent with Section 1 of the Fourteenth Amendment, according to which one of the characteristics of a United States citizen is that he is subject to the jurisdiction of the United States. According to the dictionaries, jurisdiction means power and control. Thus, United States citizenship is constitutionally defined as being pretty much the same thing as slavery. —editor

Letters to the Editor

Hi Sam,

I just finished reading your August *Frontiersman*, and one piece there, “[South of the Border](#),” coincidentally seemed to relate to parts of a book I just finished, “Area 51 An Uncensored History of America’s Top Secret Military Base” by Annie Jacobsen. If you can get hold of a copy I strongly recommend that you do so. It might inspire more writing from you.

—Steve; Mililani, Hawaii

Thank you for your comments. I’m happy that you found the article to be interesting.

Have you investigated the Dugway Proving Ground, in Utah? Here’s another thought. Although I’ve never seen it mentioned anywhere, I believe that there’s another big, secret facility in the Frank Church River of No Return wilderness, in Idaho. It might be interesting for you to read my story “[Bill, Bob, and the Dirty Trickster](#)”, in the September 2007 issue. —editor

to be subservient and accept its alleged jurisdiction over me. That is why I am not a United States citizen. ∞

Other Articles of Interest

“If This Be Treason, Make the Most of It!”, *The Voluntaryist*, Issue 30, February 1988

“The Exit Option”, *The Voluntaryist*, Issue 37, April 1989

“Conflicts of Allegiance”, *The Voluntaryist*, Issue 37, April 1989

“Man Without a Country”, *The Voluntaryist*, Issue 49, April 1991

“Citizenship Papers”, by Clark Hanjian, *The Voluntaryist*, Issue 49, April 1991

“Patriotism or Voluntarism? – ‘Anywhere So Long As There Be Freedom’”, *The Voluntaryist*, Issue 66, February 1994

“Why I Refuse to Be Numbered”, *The Voluntaryist*, Issue 116, 1st Quarter 2003

“The Territorial Imperative: Rationale for Conquest”, *The Voluntaryist*, Issue 133, 2nd Quarter 2007

“Slavery and National ID” in NATIONAL IDENTIFICATION SYSTEMS (2004)

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Dear Sam:

I’ve had so many problems getting the *Frontiersman* online that I think it would be best if you went back to sending me a paper copy.

This is the thirty year anniversary of the death of Ayn Rand. Do you think that her ideas are having any influence?

—Sir Donald the Elusive

I’d be interested to know if anybody else is having difficulty with access to the website. Regarding Ayn Rand, I doubt if most people even remember her name. —editor

Stray Thoughts

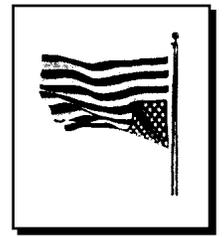
Sam Aurelius Milam III

- If a kid gets into trouble in school, then that might be a good thing. It might mean that he’s thinking for himself.

- People who believe that human sexuality is obscene or sinful are fundamentally sick people.

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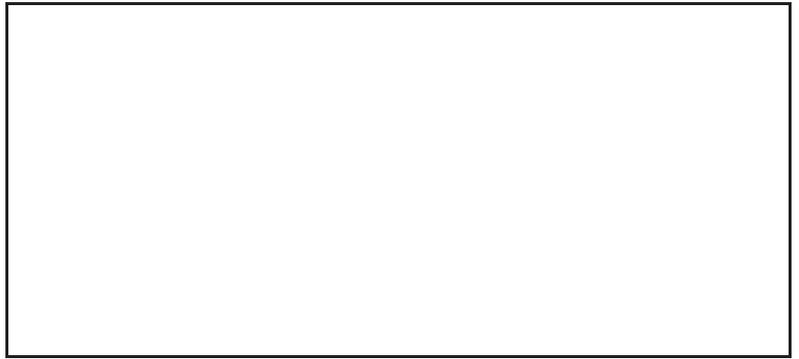
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Nation in Distress

The legitimate boundaries of lawful government are not geographical. They are contractual.

— *The Long and Winding Doctrine:
Social Contract*
Sam Aurelius Milam III



Acknowledgments

My thanks to the following: SantaClara Bob; Lady Jan the Voluptuous; my mother; Dewey and Betty; and Sir Donald the Elusive. — editor

Observations

Original Source Unknown. Forwarded by David, of Idaho Falls, Idaho.

- I went to a bookstore and asked the woman for the self-help section. She said that if she told me that, then it would defeat the purpose of the section.
- War doesn't determine who's right, only who's left. ∞

Useful Units of Measure

Original Source Unknown. Forwarded by David, of Idaho Falls, Idaho.

- The ratio of an igloo's circumference to its diameter:
Eskimo Pi ∞

Frontiersman

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Questions

Original Source Unknown. Forwarded by David, of Idaho Falls, Idaho.

- Why doesn't Tarzan have a beard?
- If we evolved from monkeys and apes, then why do we still have monkeys and apes?
- Should you trust a stockbroker who's married to a travel agent?
- Is boneless chicken considered to be an invertebrate?
- Do married people really live longer than single people or does it just seem longer?
- If all of those psychics know the winning lottery numbers, then why are they still working?
- Isn't Disneyland a people trap operated by a mouse?
- Sooner or later, doesn't everyone stop smoking?
- Isn't keeping the lower part shut the best way to save face? ∞

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— Sam Aurelius Milam III, editor

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