

LIBERTAS REVIEW: a journal of peace and liberty

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LR RESUMES PUBLICATION

After an absence of nearly eighteen months, *Libertas Review*, the national newsletter of the Society for Libertarian Life, has resumed publication.

Publication of the journal was suspended in early 1983 as a result of shortages in manpower. "It was one symptom of a general condition," according to Brad Rodriguez, the Society's Executive Director. "Many of our most active members found themselves in positions where they had to reduce their involvement in

SLL. And *Libertas Review* is very dependent on volunteer labor."

Recent reorganization, and a resurgence of SLL activity, have led to the revival of the popular journal. In particular, the creation of an independent publishing group, and the conversion to a computer generated format, are expected to significantly streamline the production process.

To compensate for the eighteen-month suspension, and to ensure that no members lose this benefit, the

Society is extending all memberships and subscriptions by the same period. "Many people join the SLL to receive *Libertas Review*," Rodriguez said. "We intend to see that they get what they paid for."

"With libertarian activism faltering, we see the production of *Libertas Review* as one of the most important activities of our organization," concluded Rodriguez. "We need this, and similar, journals, to keep the libertarian movement alive, cohesive, and exciting."

YOU, YOUR RIGHTS, AND THE FBI

THE FBI IS AMERICA'S NATIONAL POLICE FORCE. In theory, it has a very limited job to do -- investigate federal crimes. Most crimes (assault, robbery, trespass) are state crimes; federal crimes are created by special statute and are theoretically an injury to the national government or its property. Bank robbery, weapons violations and crimes involving explosives have also been made federal crimes. When a "federal crime" is suspected, the FBI has authority to investigate. When only state crimes are suspected, the FBI has no authority. The FBI is also the major national agency which concentrates on gathering and disseminating domestic intelligence: information about the beliefs and activities of

people the government is afraid of, or about groups that might oppose or try to overthrow American interests at home and abroad. Other intelligence gathering agencies have powers similar to those of the FBI, but narrower area of activity. For example, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) only investigates cases in which there is a charge of violation of laws taxing the manufacture and sale of alcohol or tobacco. State and local police and private "security" agencies also have investigative powers, but these are geographically limited. All of these different agencies share information. Much of it is on computer and available to other law-enforcement agencies in a matter of seconds.

WHERE DOES THE GOVERNMENT GET ITS INFORMATION? There are a lot of sources, but the most important one is people like you -- friends, neighbors, relatives, acquaintances, co-workers of someone suspected of having 'subversive' ideas or plans. Government agents can always get a certain amount of information from official sources -- birth certificates, driver's licenses, credit cards, telephone records, bank statements. Even school records may be easy for them to get. But what they can't find out from such sources is what groups a person belongs to, who she or he is close to, what her or his strong and weak points are. These things must be learned from live people close to the person under investigation. Once the government gets this kind of information, there is no control over what it is used for. Or who it is shared with.

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THE LIMITS OF LOOKING OUT FOR NUMBER ONE

by Dick Eagleson

The considerable recent success of the biographical movie "Gandhi" has gotten many libertarians even more than usually interested in employing Gandhian principles of non-violent Satyagraha for the achievement of greater liberty in our own society. Contemplating non-violent resistance as a tool for prying loose more liberty, the question of the very real costs that are nearly always exacted raises some other issues that are especially pertinent for libertarians. If we are going to get free, doing so will not be an accomplishment without costs. Indeed the traditional coin for such trade was listed most eloquently in the Declaration of Independence; our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor.

To address a particularly relevant example, it seems quite apparent that a non-violent campaign of non-compliance -- properly conducted -- could mortally injure the whole tax collection infrastructure of the government, and the rest of government along with it of course. It is even possible to sketch, in general terms anyway, what such a campaign would be like.

What we would be contemplating is essentially a well-managed criminal conspiracy; criminal in the sense that it is against the law not to pay taxes deemed to be owed. If 100,000 people acted in concert to withhold taxes due, the probability of all of them going to jail would be zero. There would not be enough courts to try them, let alone cells to hold them. The probability of 1,000 people going to jail would be only slightly above zero for the same reasons. The probability of 100 or fewer going to jail, however, would be near unity. Examples must, after all, be made. A movement that appeared successfully able to resist

such harassment and hold together could spread very quickly once credibility was established. A central -- and sticky -- problem, of course, is that a certain number of people are inevitably going to wind up in the jug, perhaps for extended stays.

Something not awfully far removed from what I have described happened in Michigan a couple of years ago and apparently came close enough to critical mass to petrify the IRS. Why didn't it work? I have not examined the evidence in any detail, but rumor has it that the few selected targets the IRS chose to lean on caved in and the others quickly followed suit. One strongly suspects the same basic script would play itself out anywhere a typical group of libertarians tried to set off such a spark of meaningful protest. The Achilles heel of this kind of thing, for libertarians, is part of the "libertarian personality," if I may generalize a bit.

Selfishness, said Ayn Rand, is a virtue. True enough, but like the Bible, which is widely quoted as justification for all manner of strange and even vicious behavior, Rand's famous dictum has also provided the basis for a form of libertarian fundamentalism which is causing problems. Starting from the quite proper premise that no one has a moral claim on the life or works of another, some among us seem to feel that helping someone with problems is somehow unlibertarian. Ostentatious lack of assistance to needy parties and denigration of voluntary benevolence are hallmarks of this belief system. Rand herself seems to have contributed more than a little to this kind of hysterical self-importance. Small wonder some have characterized Rand's philosophy, and

libertarianism generally, as some sort of Social Darwinist clone!

Though well separated in attitude from such misguided extremists, most libertarians -- even we partyarchs -- tend to be individualists with a vengeance. We would all like to secure greater freedom, but not too many of us are really ready to do hard time as part of the price. This is quite understandable given the virtual certainty that, if we wind up being one of the "lucky" victims selected by the enforcement apparatus, we will be facing the full might of the State alone.

Thus, we appear to differ in some critical ways from our opposite numbers of the Left and, for a change, the comparison is not in our favor. Simply put, there is an old chestnut of left-wing politics that we substantially lack and that is hurting us. In a word, it is solidarity. The Left sticks by its "wounded." We libertarians tend to abandon or shoot ours.

A few months ago, I recently learned, Jack Matonis went to jail for tax resistance. How many now reading this were already aware of this fact? How many know where he is incarcerated? How many know his sentence, his lawyer's name, the status of his legal appeals? What about the same questions applied to the Michigan tax protesters? Does anyone even know any of their names?

Say what you will about the Left, they have learned the important lesson that, insofar as it is possible to do so, it makes sense to take care of one's own. This, they do rather well. When David Harris went to prison for draft evasion in the '60s the left-wing press kept up regular reports on his condition and morale, organized rallies on his behalf, raised money for his defense

and kept the cards and letters coming. When he was released from jail he was a major political celebrity, avidly sought after, congratulated and interviewed in the left-wing press.

In contrast, the condition of libertarian draft registration resister Paul Jacob seems an item of small concern to libertarian journals. Much more space is allocated, for example, to the phenomenally less important subject of who will be the LP candidate for President in 1984. People involved in organizing support for Mr. Jacob's continued freedom as a fugitive from federal "justice" have expressed disappointment that not many libertarians seem much interested in his case, or, indeed, in the whole question of the military draft itself.

As another counterpoint to the David Harris case, one wonders what attention, if any, will be paid to Jack Matonis when he gets out of stir? Our movement's heroes run heavily to folks such as Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry and Lysander Spooner; all of whom share the convenient characteristic of being long dead and, thus, not needful of even small displays of support or encouragement. The Left, bless the black flabby little hearts, are justly reknowned for the emotional nature of their politics, but they make it work FOR them too. No wonder, as Jerry Pournelle once pointed out, "the Left has all the good songs."

A lot of libertarians have a sort of romantic attachment to the 19th century as an era of rugged individualism. A pertinent example from that time of the sort of cooperative self-interest we still need is the barn-raising. One assisted one's neighbors in the event of natural disaster, sickness or Indian attack. Lacking much of a sense of community, modern libertarians are much less effective resisters of the State than they should be because they suspect - quite correctly - that not much in the way

of help will be forthcoming from their movement friends if push ever comes to shove with Uncle Sam.

What can we do to correct this probably fatal flaw? Deigning to learn a bit from - as well as knowing - one's leftist enemy, would be a good place to start. A tax protest movement based on non-payment tactics - to pick an instructive example - should organize as a mutual aid society in such a way that all those on the outside are pledged in advance to look after the interests of those few - and they will be few - who wind up in durance vile. A libertarian in prison on behalf of all of us ought to know that the lawyers will keep filing writs and appeals, the house payment will be kept up, the grocery bill attended to and the kids put through college if necessary while he or she is inside.

The charge I've laid here is not a light one, and I do not - by any means - exempt myself from this indictment, but it needs to be addressed. This is particularly true of non-political types who cannot even plead the excuse of trying to reverse the tax laws through the political process. I'll confess to a decided skepticism on that score. From these camps I've had nary a lecture on the advantages of cooperative action, though I've heard several on the moral superiority of not leaving tips in restaurants. To be brutally frank, I have yet to meet a rabid non-political to whom I would trust my back in a tight spot.

Silly optimist that I am, I still intend to keep looking. I also intend to do whatever I can to make the accomplishment of real liberty possible while tending to the inevitable casualties. I do not expect this to be either quick or easy of accomplishment. I DO believe that failure to see that we have a problem in this regard will doom the libertarian movement to piecemeal failure. As Ben Franklin aptly observed, "We must all hang together or we shall, most assuredly, all hang separately."

[Editor's note: this article was written over a year ago, but it has lost none of its significance. LR will actively encourage "solidarity" by publishing information about libertarian political prisoners.

Incidentally, Jack Matonis is now out of jail. Paul Jacob is still free and living underground.]

ABOUT LR

Libertas Review is intended to be a journal of news, opinion, and education.

Since LR is a quarterly publication, news cannot usually be covered in a timely fashion. Most news is better covered by other libertarian publications. Therefore, the "news" aspect of Libertas Review is strongly biased toward Society activities -- keeping our members advised of what the SLL is doing.

Opinion -- articles, editorials, and commentary -- is the "meat" of LR. The Society, through LR, provides a "neutral forum," where representatives of different libertarian groups and factions can exchange opinions. In this issue we feature an editorial by LP activist Dick Eagleson. We solicit contributions of this nature from all libertarian groups. [Editor's note: we will attempt to be as fair as possible in our selection, but reserve the right to be totally arbitrary. Please note that what we accept does not necessarily reflect the position or views of the Society for Libertarian Life, or its members.]

Finally, we will include periodic educational articles in LR. In this issue we present a reprint of an article about the FBI and your rights. We are seeking contributions of this nature, also.

Libertas Review is published for the benefit of the members of the SLL. The editorial staff welcomes your feedback, be it complaint, criticism, or (we hope) a bit of praise.

FBI [Continued from Page 1]

Another place information about the political beliefs and activities and personal habits of people comes from is 'informers'. Usually these people are not professionals who are paid to infiltrate a group. More often, the government will take advantage of a member or would-be member of a political community who is insecure or does not really belong in the community. Giving information to the government makes some people feel powerful, and for a while, it may make them think they are doing the right thing. The idea of 'informers' usually makes people very nervous. It should make everyone think about what kinds of information about us is available to strangers or people we do not know well. Anyone who suspects that someone is relaying

information to the government or is cooperating with an effort to thwart the political objectives of their organization should be ready to say so. Objective confrontation of real fears is far healthier than speculation about whether someone is or is not a spy. We should also be aware of the possibilities of physical and electronic surveillance, as sources of additional information.

WHAT IS THE FBI LEGALLY ALLOWED TO DO? Agents of the FBI are authorized to make arrests, when warranted, to conduct searches -- if they have warrants or "probable cause" -- to serve subpoenas to federal grand juries or to federal trials, and to "investigate." The FBI is authorized not to issue

subpoenas. Nor are they authorized to arrest a person for refusing to cooperate with an investigation. The FBI has absolutely no power to force anyone to answer questions, submit fingerprints or other evidence, produce books, documents or records. It cannot force anyone to look at a photograph to see if the subject is recognized. But remember: It may be a federal crime to make a false statement to an FBI agent. And the only record of what you say is the one the agent reconstructs on a "Form 302" after the interview.

[To be continued]

[This article has been provided courtesy of The Voluntaryists.]

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 Student member, two years, \$7; Non-student member, one year, \$8; Non-student member, two years, \$14; Lifetime member, \$150. Donation of \$_____ enclosed. I would like more information.

The Libertas Statement

We, as libertarians, affirm:

That full individual liberty is impossible in any society other than a voluntary one that agrees upon no one.

That men and women require the full and independent use of their own judgement in order to survive at an optimum level, and therefore have a natural right to do their own thing, providing that they do not physically harm or coercively restrict another individual's life, liberty or property;

That everyone is exclusively sovereign, and is a slave to no one;

That the individual is best served by society when he or she is free from the forcefully imposed controls of others, acting alone or in concert (as a government);

That all forms of coercion, aggression and fraud are always immoral;

That the only system consistent with personal freedoms in the economic area is one that does not interfere with free trade between consenting individuals;

THEREFORE, we as libertarians, resolve to oppose all forms of aggression by any State, Government, self-appointed savior, individual or association of individuals. We further resolve to oppose taxation, conscription, eminent domain, laws which create victimless "crimes," and all programs forced onto individuals without their consent. It is time that the chains of authoritarianism in economics and morality be broken. Individual rights and coercion cannot co-exist. Liberty cannot be compromised, and we will settle for no less than freedom in our time.

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Society for Libertarian Life

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