

Do you support slavery? Most people do.

By Holly Lisle

My position is that slavery is alive and well in the US and everywhere else in the world, that most people are in favor of it and actively working for its furtherance, and that most of them would deny fervently that they are doing anything of the sort.



I will support my position, and if you disagree with me you are invited to debate, but to debate, **you MUST follow the blog rules.**

First, let me define terms.

individual: A human being. All human beings are individuals.

individual rights: Every individual on this planet is born with the following inherent rights (and only these rights), which exist independent of any grant or external source, by virtue of the fact that the individual is alive:

- **The right to life**—that is, the right to sustain his or her own existence.
- **The right to liberty**—that is, the right to choose to take such actions as permit the individual to sustain his or her own existence, so long as these actions do not infringe on the rights of other individuals.

- **The right to the pursuit of happiness**—that is, the right to pursue any work or activity that the individual finds rewarding or pleasurable, so long as his rights do not infringe on the rights of other individuals.
- **The right to self-defense**—that is, the right of the individual to respond with force to preserve his own existence when faced with the threat of force used against him or her. No individual has the right to **initiate** force against another.

No matter where you live, no matter what sort of government you live under, these are your rights as a human being, by virtue of your existence as a human being, and these rights may not be taken away from you ethically or legitimately for any other cause than that you have *initiated* force against another human being (**Example:** You attack someone to steal his money.), or have *caused such force to be initiated*. (**Example:** You hire a hit man to kill someone, so you bear equal guilt for murder with the person who physically killed him.)

ethical human being: An ethical human being acknowledges individual human rights as the origin and underpinning of all rights, deals only voluntarily and consensually with all other human beings, and uses force against another individual only in self defense. *No human being who deals with individuals in any other way is an ethical human being.* Ethical human beings are rare, and have to work hard to remain ethical, but do exist.

ethical government: Any government that exists under constitution as the servant of the individual, with its laws created to protect individual rights and with individual rights reserved equally for all individuals, and that exists **only** to protect the individual from the use of force against him, either within or without, and which is paid voluntarily by the individual to provide the services free human beings require:

- **A military force** to protect individuals and their rights from force originating outside the nation's borders,
- **A police force** to protect the individual and his rights from force originating within the nation's borders.
- **An impartial judicial** system held to the same standard of law it enforces, charged with ensuring that laws protect the rights of the individual, which will enforce contracts and decide objectively and without bias in support of individual rights when disputes exist, and which is held accountable for every decision made by the individuals who serve within it.
- **A representative executive system** made up of individuals chosen by the vote of all those individuals represented, where the representatives must live under the laws they create, and who are charged with and entrusted with the making of laws to preserve the rights of the individual—and NO other sort—and who are held accountable for and will be judged for the laws they create.

An **ethical government** is the only entity which has the right to initiate force, and may initiate force against individuals or nations who have used force against its citizens or who intend to. Because it is *the only entity that may legitimately initiate the use of force*, ethical government must be closely controlled by **ethical human beings**: those who hold the preservation and protection of individual rights as their sole standard, and who do not seek to turn human beings into slaves. At present, I am unaware of the existence of any ethical governments in the world.

slavery: 1) Outright ownership of one human being by another human being or by a government, **OR** 2) outright ownership of the products of the labor of one human being by another human being or by a government, **OR** 3) the **involuntary** removal of the products of labor of one human being **by force** for the enrichment of another human being or a government.

Involuntary and **by force** in the definition above are actually redundant because they mean exactly the same thing, but because most people accept one of the two above as acceptable, but not the other, I've included both.

There is no such thing as the *right to enslave*.

Now I'll give examples, by sections of my definition of *slavery*.

Form 1—Outright ownership: If you walk down to the corner slave market and buy Bob so that you *claim a right to force Bob* do whatever you tell him to do, you are a slave owner and Bob is your slave. Same thing if you stick a gun to his head and take him into captivity so you can claim the right to force him to do what you tell him to do. If you hire an agent of the government to capture Bob and give or sell him to you so that you may force him to work for you, you are a slaveholder, and Bob is your slave. If your local, state, or federal government sends an agent into Bob's house to claim ownership of him so that it may force him to work, the government is a slave owner, and Bob is its slave—BUT if you are the beneficiary of the spoils of Bob's forced labor, YOU are also a slaveholder, and Bob is YOUR slave as well as the government's.

Form 2—Serfdom: If you don't actually own Bob, but *claim the right to force Bob* to give you everything he makes (either in terms of money or physical goods), you are a slave-owner and Bob is your slave. If you hire an agent of the government to take everything Bob works for to give to you (either in terms of money or physical goods), you are a slave owner and Bob is your slave. Likewise, if your government lays claim to the products of Bob's work, even if it does not claim to own him, the government is a slaveholder, and Bob is its slave. AGAIN,

however, if you receive any of the spoils of Bob's stolen labor, YOU are a slaveholder along with your government, and Bob is YOUR slave as well as the government's.

The euphemistic term for a human being who is not owned by an individual or government, but who does not own what he produces, is **serf**, but in truth, serfs are slaves.

Form 3—Enslavement by degree: If you don't own Bob, and don't lay claim to 100% of his production, but *do claim the right to stick a gun to Bob's head to force Bob* to give you some percentage of his production for as long as he produces, (whether in terms of money or physical goods), then you are a slave-owner and Bob is your slave to the degree of the percentage of his production that goes to you. If you hire an agent of the government to force Bob to give you a regular percentage of the results of his productive efforts for as long as he works, you are a slave owner, and Bob is your slave by degree. If the government claims the right to force from Bob a percentage of his productive effort for as long as he produces, then Bob is a slave of the government to the degree that what he has created is taken from him—AND if you receive any portion of the products of his forced labor, you are a slave owner by degree, and Bob is your slave by that same degree.

You as an individual are free to the degree and percent that your individual rights are protected and observed by your government and other individuals, and that the products of your effort to sustain your own existence belong to you.

Some of you are looking at instance #3, and thinking, "Wait a minute, that's, um... familiar. She doesn't really mean *that*."

Yes, it is familiar, and yes, I do mean that.

Enslavement by degree is the version of slavery most people actively and enthusiastically support for exactly as long as they can pretend that it's not *really* slavery.

I had my one brush with attempting to be a slave-owner back in the early nineties, when I applied for a grant from a government-funded arts council. I was writing a book outside my normal genre, and doing it on spec, and I thought it would be nice to have a little extra money to live on while I took the chance on a book I couldn't be sure would sell. I hoped it would sell, of course, but I couldn't be sure, and we were hurting financially. (I think the book I tried to get the grant for was a very early version of what became MIDNIGHT RAIN.)

I applied for the grant, waited a long time, and eventually heard back from the council. My grant application was turned down...but the *reason* it was turned down was both fascinating, and—when you take the time to actually think about it—horrifying.

My work did not receive a grant because it was deemed to be *commercial fiction*.

Okay. What is **commercial fiction**?

Commercial fiction is **any fiction that one human being voluntarily purchases from another human being.**

The act of volition, of having one person say, “I think this is good enough that someone will be willing to pay me for it,” and of having another human being say “I like that enough that I’m willing to pay for it,” makes a work commercial.

If just one person is willing to pay you voluntarily for your work (not donate to you: **pay** you—in that you set the price,

and your reader purchases the right to read your work), then you are a writer of commercial fiction. If you cannot make a living from one reader, you are STILL a commercial fiction writer. The right to the pursuit of happiness does not guarantee that you will be able to make a living wage from whatever you love and pursue. It simply grants you the right to pursue it, and if you don't make a living wage at it and you wish to be an *ethical human being*, you'll have to support yourself with a second job, the way all ethical writers start out, and the way many ethical writers continue for as long as they create.

HOWEVER, I was, back then, still screwed up enough that I was willing to look at money without questioning too hard where it came from. Before that rejection, I would have happily taken the grant, and I would not have looked at the price other people paid for it to exist.

That incident—and trying to figure out the standards by which the individual handing out the grants was using to select work—forced me to look at where the money DID come from, and by what standards it was being handed out. If commercial work—work people would happily pay for—was not considered appropriate for government-funded grants, then **what work was considered appropriate?**

And the answer was: Only work that the individual handing out the grants decided no one would pay for voluntarily, and that individuals should be forced to pay for, whether they liked the work or not.

Take a moment and think about that, and think about the horror that underlies it. Government money is being taken at the point of a gun (and if you would debate this point, first try **not** paying your income taxes, then call me from prison to let me know how that's working out for you), and it is being taken to give to people who have not earned it.

In the case of government-funded writing grants, the money taken at the point of a gun from individuals who work to support their own existences is being given to those who are creating works some individual has decided no one would pay for voluntarily. Because that's what non-commercial work is.

Non-commercial work is work people are not willing to pay for voluntarily, and government grants are the means by which governments force people who would not willingly buy a work to pay for it anyway.

I've rephrased that same statement three times, and I apologize for the repetition, but this matters.

So what sort of ethical government grants exist? None.

If you are a writer and you accept a grant funded by government taxation, you become a slave owner. You are a person who has willingly participated in the forcible removal of the products of another individual's production, which should by right belong solely to him to support his own existence. And, because you used an agent of the government to apply force against another human being for your benefit, you have walked away from being an *ethical human being*.

Any human being can regain his ethics. To do so, you agree that never again will you be party to the use of force against any other human for your benefit, that you will only deal with other human beings voluntarily and by mutual consent, theirs and yours. And that you will resist in any legal manner you have available to you the use of such force against yourself.

Remember, *the right to enslave* does not exist. Not for anyone, not for any reason.

Comments have been closed for the simple reason that the vast majority of commenters EITHER had not fully read the post and chose to think I said that ALL taxes are slavery, which is nothing like what said, or what I think, OR were A) supporting slavery while B) NOT demonstrating WHY they believe people must be slaves for civilization to work.

For those who offered insightful response, thank you, and I appreciate your input.

For those who think that “slavery is okay if it’s just a little slavery,” I’ll note that your argument is the same as “poison is okay if it’s just a little poison,” as well. Both arguments remain false.

Finally, for the folks who were attempting to argue that human beings have no rights, please unsubscribe from my list. You have the right to think whatever you like, but I have no desire to help you make a better life for yourself.

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