

[This rant on the motto of government was excised because it is nitpicking. - Robert Von Stricker Beresford]

Canada is supposedly all about “peace, order, and good government” (it's our motto, after all). Well, the latter we can pretty much throw out. One person's definition of good government is another's definition of tyranny. We can certainly try to keep our governments from being evil. That has obviously a lot to do with the system they operate in. But I still think it's a silly phrase. I guess it isn't to anyone who lives in a dictatorship. But since I don't, I may laugh.

Peace and order are a different issue. Are they redundant or do they apply to different things? If we take order as security, it is hardly the only value. It is certainly *a* value, but it is one amongst many. I quoted Geuss [in the book] referencing Nietzsche: there is no end of a state, it doesn't exist to pursue *an* end, even if that end is security. The state is the force most responsible for security in our lives, but there are other concerns for it, and for the citizens. Security may be something we need, but it is just one of many things individuals and communities require. Although if it is absent, it is obviously a problem. If we didn't have the order we have, I doubt I would have had the time to write this book. I'd be busy defending my Fortress of Solitude from the 'other.'

Some people seriously believe security to be a good. I can say I don't because I have been spoiled by living in an affluent, peaceful country. I would feel very differently if I lived in the Sudan, for example. But I don't. And so I undervalue security and overvalue liberty. Given that my circumstances have allowed me this, and continue to allow it, I see no reason to change my mind. I am who I am, born where I was born, et cetera, but that doesn't mean my conclusions are, thereby, less valuable than a Sudanese, as some posties might insist. We should consider ourselves fortunate that we can make the decision for liberty in relatively easy circumstances. In a country such as ours, where we have overcome our 'birth pangs,'¹ and when we really aren't much of a target of terrorism,² freedom or

1 I remain shocked how certain people were not laughed out of office...

2 People keep telling me otherwise...I'm still waiting for that terrorist attack...it's going on ten years now, folks. Anyway, call me when the CN tower is blown to shit, because I've given up scaring myself.

liberty or rights, or what have you, must come before 'order' or martial law, as far as possible. There are many reasons for this.

The emphasis on security does more to hurt freedom than the emphasis on freedom does to hurt security, contrary to what anyone in the security business³ will tell us (and how do they tell us? They try to scare us...that should tell us everything we need to know). The security measures are always difficult to retract. New justifications can always be found after the measures have outgrown their (debatable) usefulness. That is the inherent problem in implementing 'temporary' restrictions of liberties. The new power, given to whomever, is something we, as human beings, enjoy. We don't want to give it back. We will find reasons to keep it, and to keep everyone else down.

I have yet to see 'emergency' security measures that work as well as they are supposed to. I have yet to see 'emergency' security measures that are not abused. If you have any examples of either, please let me know.⁴ In the meantime, such facts tell us to think and wait before we enact any security measure that isn't automatically repealed within hours of the end of an emergency. For example, there is nothing wrong with grounding all planes when there has been an air attack. We don't need to wait and think before doing this. But any 'temporary' restrictions in the future about where planes can and can't fly must be the subject of time and hard thinking. So I reject our motto of *Peace, Order and Good Government*.

³ Governments are in the security business

⁴ Editor's Note: Hass would have included his email address if he were still alive.