

# Natural Born Slaves?

*Cain*

Men have arisen again and again armed with pitchforks to fight armies with cannon; men have also submitted docilely to the weakest and most tottery oppressors.

—*Hagbard Celine, Never Whistle When Your Pissing*

What do you expect? People are machines. Machines have to be blind and unconscious; they cannot be otherwise, and all their actions have to correspond to their nature. Everything happens. No-one does anything.

—*G. I. Gurdjieff*

Okay, I'm going to spill a horrible truth here. Well, maybe not so horrible for some of you—I'm sure you're intelligent, happening people who know where it's at. In which case, it seems pretty obvious that most people are not only slaves but they are willing to be slaves and enjoy it. What's worse, this is the normal condition for most of humanity.

The truly horrible thing is that, as a species, we can adapt to anything. We can adapt to eighty-hour weeks at minimum pay. We can adapt to breaking rocks in a Gulag. We can adapt to working a plantation an ocean away from our homeland from where we were kidnapped. For every time a slave has risen up in disobedience, ten thousand more have fought to defend their masters, and not only through their inaction. When Nat Turner was inspired to take up arms against his masters by visions of God, he ended up fighting other slaves who wanted things to stay as they were.

The inner slave is within us all. It's the voice telling us to accept our lot, that it isn't so bad really, that in fact we are doing much better than others. It reaches its sickeningly glorious heights when we start to agree with our masters about our situation, about how it is our natural fault.

Propaganda helps with this, no matter if its racist Christian supremacy where you are blamed for being black, or free-market economics where you are blamed for not working hard enough. With only ill-defined objections and alternatives, we start to feel even a bit privileged at our status. “Yes, I may be working in my office so much I only see my wife when I sleep and wake up, but at least I’m not out on the streets like some poor schmucks.”

To revolt, you have to be a little bit crazy, a little bit insane. Our romantic view of revolutions and rebellions as being the product of rational thinking, of logical and committed men and women, vanishes once you look into the world and see how it works. All economies have a form of slavery at their base, even Aristotle understood that there was a “natural slave type.” So why believe in freedom at all, in that case?

This is where those rational men and women come in, those products of the Enlightenment who smashed down the previously unassailable doctrines of past centuries. If others can’t be free, then can we truly be free either? It’s too easy to get caught up in a system of casual or not-so-casual exploitation and horrific violence against fellow human beings. It holds back the individuals who are free and are able to progress. Freedom may not be to the taste of everyone, but if it’s not available for all then it becomes privilege and only benefits the few.

That’s why people must understand that there truly are unassailable rights, that freedom (not the political “freedumb” of politicians, but the real deal) is for everyone and cannot be kept for the few, be it through economic exploitation or physical coercion. Some outside agent cannot decide who does what, only *you* are able to make that judgement. The sooner we realize this, will there actually be some sort of progress on this damn rock.