

The Market For Liberty

Morris and Linda Tannehill (1970, 1984)

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With Forward by Karl Hess and Introduction by Douglas Casey

(All words in **Bold** are defined in the Civilization Engineering Glossary.)

I discovered this book in 1994 well after much of my own system and thinking had been developed. I am doubtless better off for having not been influenced by it. It is a laboriously argued attempt to get to **Freedom** as I have defined it, but fails in the end to **Bound** the necessary elements of the system. It also starts with the traditional Natural Law argument of Rights, or Natural Rights, which I reject since it is always presented in the form of an entitlement from Nature as opposed to something that has to be brought into existence by human effort. Had I read it before 1976— the year of my epiphany— my development might have gone the wrong way, as I believe that of many libertarians and other lovers of freedom has. Note the praise heaped on the work by Karl Hess and Douglas Casey. Casey correctly notes that the Tannehills never call their system anarchy— they call theirs laissez faire and they correctly attack the **Worst Idea in History** which is the institutionalization of coercion— but many who followed in their footsteps did call this viewpoint anarchy and have hampered the drive to **Freedom** immeasurably. This hideous nomenclature is a public-relations/marketing donnybrook.

I maintain that the following things must be correct and in proper juxtaposition in order to build a stable, durable civilization: **Freedom** and **Justice** properly understood—i.e. derived from the postulates of **Intentional Science**; the institutions of **Community**, **Government**, **Money** and **Clearinghouse**. Like everyone else, the Tannehills are woefully unconscious on the subject of **Community**, failing to recognize its dynamics and its necessary restrictions and how those restrictions set the stage for the thing we all dread the most: institutionalized coercion. Until someone demonstrates how a **Community** can function with restrictions and without coercion, the world is not going to believe it is possible. The idea of **Coercion** as a necessary element is just too ancient and entrenched to be removed by words. The Tannehills' narrative surrounds all the necessary elements but in the end fails to **Bound** the system into an integrated whole. Using their model one cannot build a **Community** that really works and hence no demonstration for the world to emulate.

After their mishandling of the concept of **Community**, their second biggest failure is the treatment of the **Administration of Physical Force**— which I call **Government** when done on a voluntary, subscription, fee-for-service basis. After many laborious and nuanced chapters discussing issues which are appropriate to what I call policing or refereeing the **Community**— although they do not seem to be aware of this, arguing instead for the defense of “rights”— they are logically driven to confront the fact that physical force is an element of the set— as the mathematicians say— and must be dealt with. Since physical force is here to stay, the question becomes how to erect a mechanism that can administer a physical counterforce against **Coercion** and not have it come back and destroy you. This is precisely the issue the Founding Fathers wrestled with and failed to solve. The Tannehills even bring in the mechanism of insurance as the answer but then basically shortchange it by deploying it only in its traditional form that Gordon Smith came to call negative insurance. Negative insurance is the only kind of insurance the world has seen to date and is the

mechanism which reimburses the insured party for its losses. The Tannehills then laboriously step through all the dynamics of how that mechanism plays out in the marketplace. Having negative insurance does nothing to reduce the risk of incidence of the loss. Smith's brilliant solution to the problem of **Government** was to use the insurance mechanism— all those who wish to participate pay in and are protected, but only a few have a claim— to erect a counterforce so awesome that no wannabe criminal would dare chance doing the crime in the first place. Having such a policy on oneself would measurably reduce the risk of the loss— the would-be act of coercion— and is thus positive insurance. This is a new form of coverage that greatly diminishes or even prevents the loss in the first place. This is positive insurance. The Tannehills are light years from this concept and history will show it to be the linchpin of a stable, durable civilization.

The Tannehills' argument/system collapses on pages 78 and 79. They posit that is it morally correct for one to use physical force in the act of self-defense. They further posit that it is still morally correct for one to hire an agent to act on one's behalf in the case of self-defense— so far so good. Then they posit that to subscribe to this 'voluntary' government service one has to renounce use of physical force on his own initiative, except in emergencies, and must let the government defend him and act as final arbiter in any disputes he might have. "Such a 'voluntary' government, acting as nothing more than an agent of individual self-defense, may sound good on the surface but on examination proves to be unworkable because government, even the most limited government, is a coercive monopoly." And then several paragraphs later: "The man who 'hires' a government to be his agent of self-defense will, by this very act of entering into a relationship with this coercive monopoly, make himself defenseless against his 'defender.' A 'voluntary government, acting as an agent of self-defense,' is a contradictory and meaningless concept." The Tannehills seem to short-circuit on the word government and always equate it with coercive mechanisms even after giving the OK to the act of voluntarily hiring someone to do your fighting for you. The errors here are many but the biggest is to assume that anything that is called government is coercive to its customers and must of its nature have a monopoly in a given geographical area, which they also assume for some unstated reason. This is completely wrong. It is the exact same trap that Ayn Rand fell into. For instance, the institution of marriage is a **Community** in the sense I have defined it. A couple can hire any **Government** they want to enforce the terms of that marriage contract. In any given geographical area, there could be scores of companies (governments) competing for the business of protecting that marriage contract. In no way does geography have anything to do with it.

Examples of arenas such as marriage that call for a **Government** (game-keeper) are numerous, but the granddaddy of them all is the geographical **Community**. The prevailing idea is that if one moves into a given **Community**, one has surrendered one's sovereignty on all aspects of one's life. Presently our sad civilization is operating on the premise that all citizens are wards of the State and everyone's life needs to be micromanaged by the State or Federal legislature. There is no mechanism in place to back off the political state from its relentless intrusions and parasitism. This is our biggest problem and dwarfs all other threats to our existence such as muggers, rapists and conmen. The Tannehills are completely oblivious to this and they never even address this problem let alone solve it. They can't solve it since they never get to the **Glue** of civilization.

The book is a waste of your time and is included here only since it has a following which I hope to persuade to come over to the correct viewpoint— **Civilization Engineering**.

Community is the surrender of some part of your options but should not be the surrender of your **Sovereignty**. Do it carefully. Don't wait, call for backup (**Government** voluntarily subscribed to.)

