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Bobby Whittenberg-James

Crashing the Tea Party

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I used to identify with words like “libertarian,” “minarchist,” “constitutionalist,” “state’s rightsman,” “conservative.” I was a patriot and a believer in the free market. For me, the path to being a believer in true liberty and freedom was largely a matter of looking at the world through the eyes of people outside of the United States, or the west. It was about developing a social conscience, and about realizing that we are the only people that can save us, and we need each other to do that. It was about love.

There is a disturbing independent right movement in the United States. It’s made up of 9/11 truthers, Ron Paul and Alex Jones followers, white nationalists, “anarcho”-capitalists, tea baggers, “libertarians,” etc. The movement is based in free market capitalism and isolationist nationalism and private property. I have heard this movement refer to itself as the liberty movement. Since liberty and authority are antonyms, I can’t help but notice the hypocrisy in this movement touting liberty while espousing authoritarian rhetoric and running candidates to hold powerful offices, such a President of the United States. There is also a frightening glorification of the indigenous slaughtering, slave owning, misogynist founding fathers of the US as champions of liberty.

To say “this isn’t capitalism anymore, but corporatism” not only bogs us down in semantics, but ignores root problems. Even if this were true, that if it is so easily and seamlessly commandeered by criminals and conspirators, one would have to concede that such vulnerability and volatility are inherent flaws that leave the system open to tyranny. To claim that capitalism has been overtaken is to ignore the necessity of capitalism to spread and morph to be able to maintain itself. It also neglects the fact that corporatism or fascism is a natural progression of capitalism. If one doesn’t start with capitalism, one does not progress to corporatism or fascism. There isn’t a flaw within the way the system is, run, the system is inherently and profoundly flawed. Rather than focusing on methods of regulation and deregulation and their degrees, we need to focus on create local sustainable economies.

Let us also move away from conspiracy theories. There is no conspiracy. It’s right in front of our faces for us all to see. The few profit at the expense of the many. This is tyranny, not conspiracy.

We also need to set straight the idea of what redistribution of wealth is. In a capitalist system, profits are a redistribution of wealth from labor to capital. The wealth is redistributed up the hierarchy from those who create it to those who own capital. To send it back down the hierarchy is not to “redistribute” but to put it back in the hands of the people who created it in the first place, hands it should never leave to begin with.

Capitalism is based on growth and is unsustainable both in theory and in practice. To leave such a system unregulated leads to unfettered accumulation of wealth by a few at the expense of the many. To regulate it by the state is to bring about tyranny of another form. You essentially end up with the government functioning as a giant corporation. Rather than focusing on methods of regulation and deregulation and their degrees, we need to focus on meeting people’s needs sustainably.

There is only one way to enforce accumulation of wealth and property. That way is violence. Whether this is enforced through private or state police forces or armies, it remains true that the only way to protect wealth, property, and markets is through force, coercion, and violence. The idea of private property (not to be confused with private possessions) is inherently at odds with the ideas of liberty. If one person “owns” a piece of land, they violate everyone else on the planet’s “right” to own that piece of land as well. In doing so, anyone who owns property is violating the right of every other person on the planet to “own” that property.

Many in the independent right claim to be revolutionaries. If this is the case, one who identifies as a revolutionary should be willing to challenge the system itself, not just the way in which it’s implemented. This would be akin to slave abolitionists asking for better working conditions and gentler masters for slaves. What we need is not different rulers, but to rule ourselves.

As an anarchist, I can’t help but become indignant, when so called “libertarians” speak of liberty. Liberty for who? Liberty for the immigrant worker? Borders and states only serve to divide people and demarcate physical boundaries of political power. If one is willing to defend one’s property with violence, then how can you deny some who takes the non-violent action of crossing an imaginary

line the right to protect their family from poverty and starvation? Liberty for women? Much of the independent right movement is anti-choice. Liberty for the poor? The independent right is against a non-profit healthcare system that would be accessible to everyone free of charge. If we start off with the understanding that some people will have plenty and others will go without, if we start out with the understanding that some people die because they are not able to purchase the commodities to keep them alive, if we start with the understanding that some will be rulers, and others will be ruled, we fail from the very start.

Do we really want to leave the human lives to market forces? Do we let economic theory determine who starves or who receives health care? Do we really turn everything including human rights into a commodity?

Let me ask you, independent right, tea partiers, 9/11 truthers, Ron Paul and Alex Jones followers . . . is your revolution about justice for all people regardless of race or nationality? Is it about taking away state power and building up people power? It is about tearing down borders to allow for the free movement of people? Is it about equality? Is it about direct democracy? It is about the abolition of private wealth and property? Is it about alleviating suffering and making sure that people’s needs are met sustainably? If it’s not, then it’s time to determine if you are seeking liberty and justice, or if you just want **your** tyrants in power. “Tyranny is tyranny! Let it come from whom it may!” Liberty is only liberty when it extends to all people in equal portion. Otherwise it is merely privilege extended to a lower class by an upper class. We will not serve an upper class, nor will we oppress a lower class. We will however, take back control of our lives, and live as equals. All power to the people!

Peace, Love, and Anarchy,
Bobby Whittenberg