

# There is No Libertarian Right Wing - Postliterate - Medium

By Postliterate

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Gadsden flags, a symbol of “right-wing libertarianism,” side-by-side with Confederate and Nazi flags at the Unite the Right Rally in Charlottesville.

To refrain from perverting the term “libertarianism” further, I will use the term “propertarian,” or some variant of “laissez-faire capitalist” when I speak of the so-called “right-wing libertarians.”

# 1 — Friendly to Fascism, Unfriendly to Freedom

For Marx, the specifics of an idea at first are not as important as who these ideas intend to serve. In the case of the spearheads of the modern Austrian school of economics — who still play a fundamental role in propertarian theory — this notion seems imminently applicable. As much as its modern founder, Ludwig von Mises, had grand visions for the natural flourishing of man, Mises' ideas served the bourgeois class as effectively as a thinker like Marx would have expected.

Mises contributed a callable portion of his political career as policy advisor for the proto-fascist Engelbert Dollfuss. Mises' austerity policies notwithstanding, he allocated much effort to crushing labor and its right to organize.

“In the vain hope of avoiding more redundancies, many workers were at first willing to accept a reduction in hourly rates, in addition to cuts in the working day... [The government] backed the employers. In fact government action had given the employers the green light in the first place. Under the terms of the 1930 Anti-Terror Act the legal status of collective contracts had been altered, invalidating all closed shop agreements and halting the practice of deducting union dues at source... [B]y the introduction of the Anti-Terror Act the government had shown that the attack on the Free Trade Unions, which had hitherto been led by private employers, was to be extended to the public sector and intensified.” [1]

“Rising unemployment strengthened the hand of the employers in the labour, and they attempted to dismantle what was left of the Republic's labour legislation... There was a noticeable effect on the incidence of industrial action. The number of disputes fell from 242 in 1928 to 30

in 1932, and over the same period the total number of strikers declined from 562,992 to 79,942, reflecting the erosion of economic security.”  
[2]

Mises delivers a telling passage in *Die Ursachen der Wirtschaftskrise*:

“These union tactics naturally presuppose that the government tolerates this behavior, at the least. Were it to proceed in its usual way and interfere with the criminals who abuse jobseekers and vandalize the machines and other of the entrepreneurs’ facilities, then circumstances would be different. But that it has capitulated to the unions is the precise feature that characterizes the modern state”

In short, to Mises, workers asserting their right to organize were nothing more than troublemakers who do not know what’s good for them. The underside of this already nasty worldview is illuminated in a letter to Ayn Rand, revealing Mises’ bleeding elitism and contempt for masses which demand better conditions:

“You [Rand] have the courage to tell the masses what no politician told them: you are inferior and all the improvements in your conditions which you simply take for granted you owe to the effort of men who are better than you.” [3]

Forgetting economics for a moment, Mises seems to have been explicit that his ideas of “liberty” only applied to a few men — those who are superior — and all others deserve to merely shut up and gratefully follow. This line of thinking has served the groundwork for neo-monarchist movements, notably Nick Land’s idea of the *Dark Enlightenment* → <https://www.thedarke.nl/enlightenment.com/the-dark-enlightenment-by-nick-land/>. Freedom, to Mises, was never a plan for the masses; it was a plan for the superiors.

Returning to Dollfuss, he was, of course, anything but libertarian in his policies — austerity had to be *imposed*, after all. The stark decline in quality of life for working men and women as welfare was almost entirely

slashed and unions suppressed demonstrated nothing of a concern for “liberty.”

“A persistent deflationary economic policy combined with an anti-democratic determination served to demoralise and weaken the working class [...] Dollfuss was determined to use the opportunities offered by the depression to the full. Once parliament had been closed down and the government began to rule by emergency degree, a series of measures were taken to further weaken the organised working class. ‘Economic necessity’ was used as an excuse for such political moves. Social security payments were reduced. Strikes were forbidden. The rights of workers to even discuss wages and working conditions were drastically reduced. [...] Thus by February 1934 the condition of the Austrian working class was miserable [...] With massive unemployment, the erosion of political rights and wretched living conditions the vast majority of the workers were demoralised, tired, hungry and lacking in a sense of common purpose and direction.” [4]

Let us not forget Hayek (Mises’ successor) or Friedman either:

“[W]e should also recall that von Mises was not alone in support for the ‘quick-fix’ of fascism. Fellow ‘Austrian’ economist von Hayek, likewise, had long postulated the need for a temporary dictator to eliminate the excesses of democracy before supporting the dictatorship of Pinochet in Chile (Andrew Farrant, Edward McPhail and Sebastian Berger, “Preventing the ‘Abuses’ of Democracy: Hayek, the ‘Military Usurper’ and Transitional Dictatorship in Chile?” *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, Vol. 71, №3 [July, 2012], pp. 513–538). Nor should we forget that Milton Friedman praised Pinochet for introducing a ‘free market’ in Chile: apparently a ‘free’ market in labour is consistent with workers being terrified of striking — or

merely talking back to their boss — in case their tortured corpse ends up on the side of the road. Both, needless to say, praised the Chilean economic ‘miracle’ shortly before it crashed in 1982.” [5]

It is not enough to merely mention the dictator Pinochet — whose US-backed coup murdered a democratically-elected president — and his support from supposed lovers of liberty. We cannot also forget that Friedman, like Mises, was an economic policy advisor as well — to US president Ronald Reagan — whose attempts to control the money supply, violently privatize industry, commit to defense of private property with all of its means at its disposal, and even commit to spreading neoliberalism abroad by force — a tactic which serves not “the people” so much as those who are permitted ownership of this property first: the capitalist — reflected absolutely nothing of “freedom” as it did of ideology, power, and violence.

For more in-depth writing on this topic, I recommend Harvey’s [Brief History of Neoliberalism](http://www.proglocode.unam.mx/sites/proglocode.unam.mx/files/ABriefHistoryNeoliberalism.pdf) → <http://www.proglocode.unam.mx/sites/proglocode.unam.mx/files/ABriefHistoryNeoliberalism.pdf>.

## 2 — Ownership for the Elite Only

“[I]f one starts a private town [...] persons who chose to move there or later remain there would have no *right* to a say in how the town was run.” [6]

“In a purely libertarian world, where all streets are privately owned, the various street owners will decide, at any given time, whether to rent out the street for demonstrations, whom to rent it to, and what price to charge. It would then be clear that what is involved is not a ‘free speech’ or ‘free assembly’ question at all, but a question of property rights: of the right of a group to offer to rent a street, and of the right of the street owner either to accept or reject the offer.” [7]

“In a covenant concluded among proprietor and community tenants for the purpose of protecting their private property, no such thing as a right to free (unlimited) speech exists... [N]aturally no one is permitted to advocate ideas contrary to the very purpose of the covenant of preserving and protecting private property, such as democracy and communism. There can be no tolerance toward democrats and communists in a libertarian social order. They will have to be physically separated and expelled from society.” [8]

From a section entitled “A Right-Wing Populist Program”:

“4. Take Back the Streets: Crush Criminals. And by this I mean, of course, not ‘while collar criminals’ or ‘inside traders’ but violent street criminals — robbers, muggers, rapists, murderers. Cops must be unleashed, and allowed to administer instant punishment, subject of course to liability when they are in error.

5. Take Back the Streets: Get Rid of the Bums. Again: unleash the cops to clear the streets of bums and vagrants. Where will they go? Who cares? Hopefully, they will disappear, that is, move from the ranks of the petted and cosseted bum class to the ranks of the productive members of society.” [9]

A propertarian society entails an elite which controls all and a majority which is under their thumb (sounds a bit like the generalized obloquy against socialism, no?) — in short, class society. Leftists have expended much effort to demonstrating how a capitalist class society is in every way unfree; what they must do now is demonstrate how unfree capitalism is *on its own terms*, i.e., whilst assuming its ideological sophistry to be true. Let us assume, then, an even playing field for all, and a pure implementation of capitalist exchange: markets, capital accumulation, and private property.

Capitalism as an ideological doxa contends to be the free association of producers who ultimately produce for the common good — or in other words, exactly the definition of *socialism* as defined by Paul Mattick in [an](#)

[essay on Bolshevism → https://www.marxists.org/archive/mattick-paul/1938/revolution-failure.htm](https://www.marxists.org/archive/mattick-paul/1938/revolution-failure.htm) (from here it is already clear the similar values shared by many who desire freedom, right or left, differing only in tactics.) Under capitalism, individual producers create goods for profit and are rewarded with profit by the dollars of the masses of consumers. Good producers receive both reward for good will and funding for further development of this public good; bad producers are out-competed and pushed off the market.

Why do I believe these ideas, applied to capitalist society, to be mere conjectures? There a number of reasons:

1. Production precedes consumption.
2. Not everyone is a producer, but all are consumers.
3. Humans are not infinite in number nor in individual strength; as such, market competition cannot behave like a level playing field so much as a bracket which culminates in one winner. Temporal change can only begin the process anew as consumer demand changes, not overturn the process itself.
4. Promotion of individual striving in the marketplace entails the denial of autonomy for all who are not sole producers and yet require work.
5. Individual economic success in a pure, unfettered market translates into social power.

The first two may be of the most importance from which the others act as commentary. #1 states that producers will always have the larger control over production in a market despite consumers “voting with their dollars.” This is because as long as production precedes consumption, consumers can only choose between the choices already produced; in other words, consumers must choose between choices while producers chose the choices themselves. The relationship between producer and consumer is thus inherently unequal (as an aside, economic planning is one of many proposals to shift power back to consumers in this relationship by allowing consumers

— that is to say, all people — to “chose the choices” beforehand, thus directly controlling production and not merely guiding an already flowing stream.)

#2 states that not all people are producers. Particularly in a capitalist market, it should be clear not anyone is cut out to compete in the market. In this sense I have a certain respect for the businessman (I cannot say the same, however, for inheritors of business), and I believe entrepreneurship should be re-emphasized in socialist society — albeit in a radically different form to the way it is today — and be able to truly serve the demos and not merely the few, as it does in capitalist society.

#2 iterates that even before private accumulation of egregious wealth, inheritance, and a million other signs of class society, we can already see laid before us a power imbalance in the way production occurs in a market. Capitalism is thus not competition between people; it is competition between *capitalists*, and these capitalists’ talents are distributed in society in a unhealthy way — that is, they offer to the capitalist power over the production, labor, and subsequent lives of masses of people.

A lukewarm solution to this dilemma is the proposal of market exchange which rejects emphasis on individual ownership and success. This has been the pretext for many “market socialist” and mutualist designs. The issue remains that unless worker-operated enterprises could communicate in a manner so interconnected that it can hardly be called market exchange at all, firms are still the masters of production. In refusing to forget Bordiga’s infamous quote, “*The hell of capitalism is the firm, not the fact that the firm has a boss,*” it will hopefully come to light the illogical methods of production inherent in markets themselves.

From this view, the pretense of “crony capitalism” is a denial of the essential characteristics of capitalist exchange. You do not *accumulate, accumulate, accumulate*, and then merely brush off excess waste and capitalist social power; instead you find a society whose economic base is governed by an elite few whose are allowed full privacy, even if against the will of the masses — a class society.



### 3 —Political Rights from out of Thin Air

All political rights are the result of actions by the state, i.e. by a monopoly on violence. Without a state, there are no rights to be granted or liberties to be defended, there is merely the free person and her ability to cooperate with other free individuals and groups.

“In general, as I think Hegel said, ‘for every Right there is a Duty’. So, for example, you have the Right to travel on public transport and a Duty to pay your fare. The right to strike implies that workers are allowed to peacefully withdraw their labour in return for respecting public order and generally not doing anything to make the strike effective.” [10]

Demanding “rights” is thus equivalent to begging the state for a small piece of freedom, and in return further ensuring subservience to the state. Many proprietarians thus admit that a state is needed in order to “protect” their rights, and resort to the common exclamation that without the state to do so, society will descend into chaos — something we’ve heard a million times before from statist, or in other words, from people who are afraid of freedom. Then let us have no mention of “liberty” around such types!

“More revealing, however, is why Libertarians retain the state. What they always insist on maintaining are the state’s coercive apparatuses of law, police, and military. The reason flows directly from their view of human nature, which is a hallmark of liberalism, not anarchism. That is, Libertarianism ascribes social problems within society (crime, poverty, etc.) to an inherent disposition of humans (re: why Locke argues people leave the ‘state of nature’), hence the constant need for ‘impartial’ force supplied by the state. Human corruption and degeneracy stemming from structural externalities as a function of power is never admitted because Libertarianism, like liberalism, fully supports capitalism. It does not object to its power, centralization, economic

inequality, hierarchy, and authority. The ‘liberty’ to exploit labor and amass property unencumbered by the state is the quintessence of capitalism, and the credo of Libertarianism née liberalism, all of which is the utter negation of anarchism.” [11]

Where, then, do those capitalists who believe the state should be abolished entirely get the idea they can and will retain private property rights? There are two possible answers:

1. Private property is the outcome of natural law, a naturally occurring agreement between free individuals.
2. Individuals must retain the right to defend their private property against those who wish to trammel it, simply for freedom’s sake.

Contemporary capitalism requires violent police to retain private property rights; are we really supposed to believe that the institution which jails the starving man whose natural inclination is to acquire food, is a natural outcome of non-coercive human action? The society of commodity abundance that is capitalism is in every way unnatural because the natural instinct of man is to use, to act, and not to have to give up a part of himself merely to eat. The commodification of labor means that not only must all objects be subject to exchange and not mere use, but that one’s body must also be sold into bondage to gain access to these commodities. A person can, with rarity, become an entrepreneur herself; more likely she will have to give up her possessions for trade if work is not an option. I have used this quote before but it remains crucial:

“Looting is a natural response to the unnatural and inhuman society of commodity abundance. It instantly undermines the commodity as such, and it also exposes what the commodity ultimately implies: the army, the police and the other specialized detachments of the state’s monopoly of armed violence. What is a policeman? He is the active servant of the commodity, the man in complete submission to the commodity, whose job it is to ensure that a given product of human labor remains a

commodity, with the magical property of having to be paid for, instead of becoming a mere refrigerator or rifle — a passive, inanimate object, subject to anyone who comes along to make use of it.” [12]

#2 reveals the deeper intentions of these extremist proprietarians. Sabatini writes,

“...Rothbard’s claim as an anarchist is quickly voided when it is shown that he only wants an end to the public state. In its place he allows countless private states, with each person supplying their own police force, army, and law, or else purchasing these services from capitalist vendors.”

Who has the strength to seize property and murder in its defense? Not everyone, that is for sure. The libertarian demand for “freedom” in the form of private property rights is thus merely “freedom” for a few...

## 4 — Diluted Radicalism and a Way Forward

“Capitalist societies can achieve economic progress under conditions of political dictatorship, for even under such dictatorship the realm of private economic activity is relatively unregulated and the normal processes of competition remain operative, while the suppression of working-class organisation may permit a higher rate of exploitation. Under socialism, there can be no such separation of oppressive state from ‘free’ economy; and if criteria of ideological ‘correctness’ dominate in the promotion of managers and even in economic-theoretical debate, the long-run prospects for growth and efficiency are dim indeed.” [13]

No, neither Milo Yiannopoulos, Gavin McInnes, Steven Crowder, nor any of their fanboys are “libertarians,” despite them asserting as such. They are at best conservatives who adopted the term simply because they like free-

dom (most everyone likes freedom but only a libertarian would seek to maximize it), and at worst are covers for fascist or crypto-fascist nonsense.

Libertarianism has, since its conception → <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/sam-young-the-first-libertarian-was-a-socialist?v=1622106222>, been left-wing and radical. To dream of a world of maximized liberty you had to be anti-state and anti-capitalist *at least*. I find that the libertarian struggle, which began under this name in the mid 19th century, has no substantial necessity to change its plan as such. We are still living in capitalism, and, if anything, leviathan has expanded its sphere of influence in our lives.

This dilution of radicalism likely began as laissez-faire capitalists mistook their broken theories for freedom; overtime, they drew the word closer and closer to the status quo. Today, libertarianism is no more than a image or a mood (maybe a flag, even), sometimes paired with a republican ballot, sometimes paired with impotence. What it is not paired with anymore, however, is the desire to smash unimaginably vast and complex structures in favor of an almost incomprehensibly free society clouded by neither structural violence nor capital.

It is time the left wing reclaim the term for its purposes and reorient its usage, not because of a linguistic purity fetish, but because of the necessity of radicalism in an age which can now see barbarism on the far horizon.

“Yes messieurs, throughout the world we are a few thousand, a few million workers who demand absolute freedom, nothing but freedom, all of freedom!” [14]

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[1] Jill Lewis, *Fascism and the working class in Austria, 1918–1934*, pg. 173–76

[2] Tom Kirk, *Nazism and the working class in Austria*, pg. 31–32

[3] *Mises and Rothbard Letters to Ayn Rand*, Journal of Libertarian Studies Vol. 21, №4, pg. 11

[4] Martin Kitchen, *The Coming of Austrian Fascism*, pg. 94–95

[5] Iain McKay, *Propertarianism and Fascism*

[6] Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, pg. 270

[7] Murray Rothbard, *For a New Liberty*, pg. 96–97

[8] Hans-Hermann Hoppe, *Democracy: The God That Failed*, pg. 218

[9] Murray Rothbard, *Right-Wing Populism: A Strategy for the Paleo*

*Movement*

[10] Wildcat, *Against Democracy*

[11] Peter Sabatini, *Libertarianism: Bogus Anarchy*

[12] Guy Debord, *The Decline and Fall of the Spectacle-Commodity*

*Economy*

[13] W. Paul Cockshott and Allin Cottrell, *Towards a New Socialism*,  
pg. 7

[14] Accused Anarchists, *Declaration to the Tribunal of Lyons*