

29 July 1998

Dear Sam -

As usual, I must disagree with Don
Cromier's reasoning in extrapolating from
definitions. I don't argue with the definitions.
But as usual, if he would look at these con-
cepts in their historical contexts, he might
avoid some "logical" leaps. Pacifists do re-
ject violence, + governments do use violence.
But this does not mean that pacifists reject
government. If one looks at the history of
pacifism, instead of the dictionary, one sees
that in the heyday of philosophical pacifism,
the 50's, the major pacifist leaders, such as
Einstein, were early representatives of world
government as the means to a world of peace.
In the early stages of the UN, before it became
obvious that the UN + the IMF were simply
the servants of the US corporations in their
domination of the world, pacifists like Ein-
stein (after having invented the Bomb - no
zeal like that of the repentant sinner - the
St Paul of pacifism) promoted the UN as a
means toward eventually creating a demo-
cratic world government, which would decide

everything peacefully + democratically. This may not be a practical ideal, but that was the ideal. (Notice that the UN is once again helping Milosevic in his ethnic cleansing, this time by ~~not~~ preventing the Kosovans from getting weapons.)

Secondly, pacifists are the kind of "idealists" who say: "I must follow my ideal of peaceful means, in whatever I do, issue by issue, whether it is practical or not." This kind of attitude does not generalize into an ideal of an anarchist society. Either way, pacifism does not imply anarchism at all.

The comparison between feudalism + anarcho-capitalism, however, is quite relevant, + has already been thoroughly explored in the cyber-punk novels, which have already ~~made~~ made their point, + gone out of style, in the 80's. Under feudalism, the lord is the head of the local military, + is himself therefore the local government, subject in theory to the king + the pope, whose power + influence were real, but limited. The lords were not absolutely subject to the king (or the pope), the

way local governments are now subject to central governments - the stronger the lord, the more independence he had - and this was a distinguishing feature of feudalism. In the libertarian fantasy world of cyber-punk, the corporations became analogous to feudal fiefs; each corporation had its own private army, + the CEO became a kind of merchantile feudal lord, the ideal of Donald Trump, which the likes of Rupert Murdoch + Bill Gates are approaching. However, this system in reality required a police state like that of the US government, as well as a passive population, believing they are "free" under a democratic constitution. In a real libertarian world, it would be too easy to sabotage technology - power lines, railroads, dams, etc; anarcho-capitalism would break down, + you might end up with literal feudalism, or perhaps (gasp) revolution.

19th century anarchism was originated by Proudhon. His ideas were rather vague.

Bakunin's anarchism, which insisted on equality, + a classless society, became the standard. Bakunin's un-hyphenated anarchism was the most violent of all. Kropotkin's anarcho-syndicalism accepted Bakunin's

ideal, + simply offered unionism/syndicalism as a means to the anarchist society. But you won't find that in Webster.

Greek democracy, with all its faults (slavery primarily), was based upon the small, manageable government of the city-state. A federation of democratic city-states was developed under the leadership of Athens, + even in this situation it amounted to an Athenian empire.

Roman democracy became the Roman empire. Only citizens of the city of Rome had the vote.

After the feudalism of the Middle Ages, democratic city-states appeared again in Italy, such as Florence. These were swallowed up with the rise of nationalistic monarchies.

Modern democracy began within the context of national monarchy, in the US, England, + France.

Industrialization developed shortly afterwards. Inequality grew, + freedom became an illusion.

Disillusionment led to the ideal of socialism + anarchism. Because of the interconnected nature of technological society, socialists claimed that large nations must be dealt with as they existed. They did not advocate socialism as a solution for small tribal societies. But they claimed that huge, interdependent populations could not realistically aspire to a return

to the ideal of the democratic city-state.

The good things in tradition should be preserved. The bad should be replaced. Only ~~judgment~~ reason + taste can decide what should remain the same, + what should change. Living traditions evolve. Conservative societies stagnate. Flexibility allows for evolution. Rigidity justifies revolution.

Today Bill Gates has as much money as the 100 million poorest people in the country, about 2/5 of the population. He got the money by robbing workers like them, + intellectuals like myself. He can afford 2/5 of the country's doctors. We cannot afford doctors. Libertarians say this is justice, but I say it's insanity.

For decades, I never shirked my duties as a citizen, but I couldn't get paid for my work, or get a book published, either. As I've said many times before, something is seriously wrong, but it's not as you describe it.

Ayn Rand was a woman.

Sincerely,

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