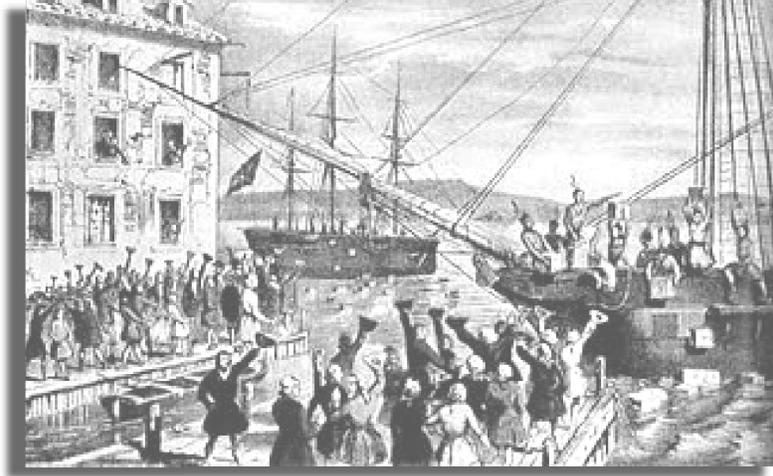
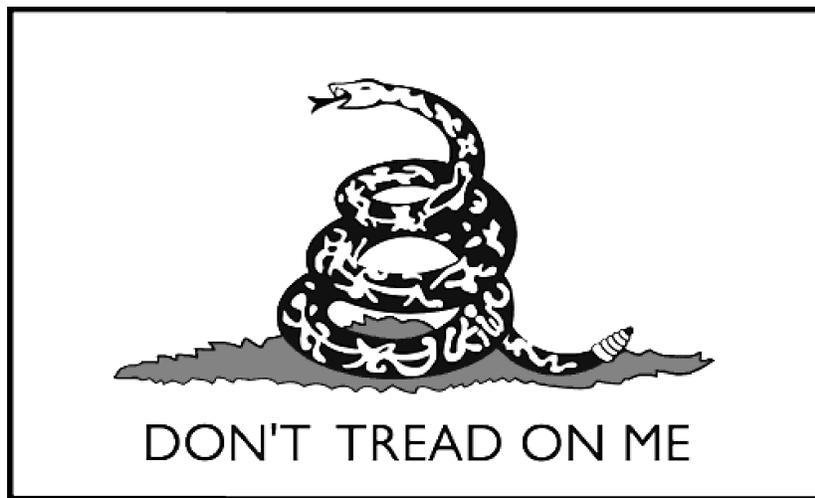


OF TEA PARTIES AND PATRIOTS:



In Defense of True Liberty For All!

An examination of our movement and a direction for the future.
by Dave Strano, edited by Jeff Hebert



....and we won't tread on anyone else.

Of Tea-Parties and Patriots: Liberty, but for who?

As the growing “pro-liberty” movement gains traction and headlines, a look at the situation we are facing and an analysis of the strategies of the new pro-liberty movement is necessary. The author of this article is a white, blue-collar male that comes from a military family background, and identifies as being a libertarian. This description is important as it helps show where this is coming from.

The Tea Party Movement...

Let's start with the idea that most of us want similar things. We, as most people do, want security, freedom, prosperity, comfort, and safety. We don't want to have to worry about where our next meal is coming from, how we're going to be able to afford school supplies for our children, or whether or not we will fall victim to a “terrorist” attack. We don't want to constantly fear losing our jobs or living the rest of our lives in precarious economic situations. We now live in a country with a huge division between rich and poor. We live with a failed economy. We live in a nearly failed state. The government of the United States has systemically become a monstrous giant of bureaucrats and neo-tyrants. The whole government, every single politician, is part of this corrupt system. Meanwhile, in our communities, both rural and urban, we are losing our jobs. We are watching our sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, dying in deserts and mountains halfway across the world. Our police forces are growing larger, just as our prison populations are, too. We, as working people, are losing everything. But, there may still be hope for us. White working people are starting to organize on a national level, as shown with the wave of “Tea Parties” and protests against what many feel to be an impending socialist nightmare in Washington, D.C. Thousands have mobilized in past months to send clear messages to the politicians in charge of this mess that we won't take it anymore. And now, we're mobilizing to shut down what many see as a socialist attempt to take away our health care options and build even more government power. But what have we gained by disruptively protesting these town hall meetings on health care reform? Are we gaining ground? Or are we merely paving the way for more losses in the future?

On Race...

The Liberty Movement resembles the broader Libertarian Movement in a lot of ways. One of these ways is in racial composition. To be plain and up front, the U.S. Right is mostly comprised of white people. The giant Tea Parties, our demonstrations and meetings are seas of white faces, with small sprinklings of nonwhite faces. Whiteness is defined in many different ways by many different people. To many, Jews are not white. Up until the mid 1900's, white skinned people of Irish and Italian descent were not considered white. Some folks still think this way. Today the category is broader, and, let's admit it, we know whether we're white or not. Most whites immediately become defensive when the word race is even brought up. We don't want to admit we think in these terms. We don't want to admit that race has anything to do with our lives or what's going on in this country. We'd rather pretend it doesn't exist and not talk about it. We can act like Ostriches all we want. It doesn't change that our movement is nearly completely white. Let's admit that, understand that, and move on to understanding what that means for us.

On Class...

When people bring up the term “class”, many white working people start to snicker. The calls of “leftist” or “socialist” or “pinko” come to the lips of many at the mere indication that someone may be conscious of class in America. Despite this, most white working people naturally view the world in terms of class, whether they'd admit it or not. Our realities are shaped by where we stand socially, economically, and politically. The vast majority of whites, like people of all other races, live in precarious social, political, and economic realities. We live paycheck to paycheck. We live off over-extended credit. We live in debt. We don't own much, if at all, in real estate. We live in stressful situations, where if one part of the chain breaks, we lose everything. Our very existence is one that includes insecurity and the chance of economic disaster. Most people in the upper classes of white society try to stifle this talk amongst us in the working or middle classes. Political, social, and church leaders try to erase the class line. But for those of us going home at night to trailers, slumlord owned apartments, dilapidated houses, or hard to pay mortgages, we shouldn't forget the large suburban homes and mansions that these leaders sleep in. Class exists. Just like race, we can't make it go away by ignoring it. But why would we even want to ignore it? Our situation as working whites boils down directly to the idea of class.

Liberty

Typically, political scientists have defined the concept of liberty as a political idea that identifies that a person has the right to act according to their own will and desire. This is how many Americans would like to think about liberty. At Tea Parties, political meetings, and other gatherings, most of us keep this image

of liberty, of true freedom, deep in our hearts. It tends to motivate how we view the rest of the world and our relationship to it. We see liberty manifested here in the U.S., and the founders of this country dying to ensure it existed.

The Other Liberty...

Let's be clear, however about the concept of liberty. We've all been duped, plainly and simply. On this land, the concept of liberty as defined in the previous context has never existed. In fact, we've had the wool pulled over our eyes so tightly, that we can't even see how the word has changed meanings and been used against us. Historically, because of the conditions in the United States, the concept of liberty in this country has taken on a much different connotation than the one previously stated. Liberty, in the United States, has become synonymous with the protection of rights to own property. To many of us, this doesn't seem like a contradiction. Part of being able to determine our own wills and act in true freedom is being able to own property. We define freedom by the ability to own objects, to own land, to own cars, to own firearms. And we defend this right to own private property to the death. However, the right to own as much property as you can is the same right that allows for the rich and elites to own more than their fair share. The right to property has become the legal and social basis for the rise in power of the robber barons on Bailout Boulevard (Wall Street). Because it's a protected right to own water resources, because it's a protected right to own more land than you will ever live on or work on, because it's a protected right to own apartments and price gouge your tenants for rent, because it's a protected right to own a business and pay your workers next to nothing, because we as white working people have helped protect these rights, we've laid the foundation for our own misery. The concepts of freedom and private property, then, are at direct odds with each other. How can we be free when a corporation owns the rights to our water? How can we be free when a bank owns the land that our house sits on? How can we be free when all of our food is owned by corporate agribusiness? How can freedom exist when a small minority can own the very things we need for survival? We've become casualties of this way of thinking for centuries. The idea that protection of the right to own things everyone needs and liberty are one and the same has allowed for the rich, the political and economic elite, to swindle the rest of us. In the name of freedom and liberty, we protect the right of 5% of the residents of this country to maintain ownership over 90% of the property and stuff of survival in this country. Modern liberty has become the freedom to starve, the freedom to lose our jobs without notice, and the freedom to have a bank take back its property from underneath us. While the rich in this country pillage our paychecks, destroy our retirement funds, and take away our livelihoods, we allow it to happen. After all, liberty doesn't exist without the protection of these property rights for the rich to own that property. By its very nature, the concept of private property has destroyed us and allowed the rich to tread all over us. And it's this thinking that has distorted our current "Liberty" Movement.

The Liberty Movement...

This new manifestation of centuries old U.S. patriotism has spread across the country like a wild fire. Tea Parties, large mobilizations denouncing a rising socialism in this country, were held in cities across the U.S. in the Spring and early Summer. New organizations on college campuses and within communities have sprung up to continue the organizing efforts. The main enemy is President Barack Obama. His policies resemble an attack on the American way of life, and they must be stopped. Led nationally by rich, politically ambitious organizers, these rallies have brought together thousands of mostly white working class participants like me to start to fight back against this onslaught from the left. However, many contradictions appear within our movement. Thousands of people who have had or will have to rely on unemployment payments, social security, and Medicare fill the ranks at demonstrations calling for an end to socialized services. Full of fear about socialism and an attack on liberty (meaning property rights, as explained above) we turn against our own interests and sell out our own needs to fight the new socialism. The unpleasant reality for us working people who participate in this new movement is that we're being used by these rich leaders within the movement to protect their interests, not ours. But that's nothing new.

A History Of Playing For The Wrong Team...

The history of non-rich white people has been a history of being exploited. However, we've been an exploited people who are allowed to exploit even *more* exploited people. While our forefathers lived in tenements and slums for centuries, we've also been used by the rich to attack our neighbors, co-workers, and friends of different colors, religions, and nationalities. Since the colonization of the Americas in the late 1400's, white working people have been the foot-soldiers of political and economic elites seeking to dominate and control land, resources, and wealth, all at our own expense. We have enlisted in armies to slaughter Native people. We've been slave catchers to trap and enslave Africans. We've been police

officers to crack down on non-white people. We've been prison guards to keep other people with similar backgrounds as us locked up. We've been settlers, occupiers, colonizers, and conquerors, but these roles have done very little to benefit us, on the whole. We've been used to benefit a small minority of politicians, bosses, and aristocrats. The blunt reality is that for the last five hundred years on this continent, white people like us have been used by rich white people to colonize for, kill for, work for, and then defend the property rights of those same rich white people, all the while sacrificing our own needs, wants, aspirations, and even lives. It really is as simple as that. No one denies the history of what has happened at working people's expenses. Wars, poverty, homelessness, wage slavery: these are all ills created by someone, and perpetuated by us, the same workers who suffer these ills, in the hope that we will be spared. For some five centuries we've been used by the rich from our own race to promote their agenda and we've suffered because of it. Yet, somehow, we've still been convinced that it is in our interests to protect the rights of the rich to own as much property as they can, to protect the right of the extremely rich to even exist, to protect these same rich people who would just as soon see us die for their benefit in wars or as police or prison guards. The heart of the matter is that for the last five centuries, we've been too busy fighting the people who should naturally be our allies against these injustices. The rich whites have used our skin color against us by using our common whiteness to convince us that we are on the same side as them. They have used our human nature of fearing people who are different or unknown against us. They've blinded us in the past with racist ideas of "white supremacy" and "white pride" and "white nationalism" into fighting people of other races who are just like us. And the New Liberty Movement plays directly into this situation, and turns us, as white working people, against our natural interests, and against our natural allies. We're still being used by rich whites to advance their causes, and we still end up struggling to have everything that we need to survive and feel economically secure.

Of Socialism And Healthcare...

Let's be real. Obama is not a socialist. His reforms and the reforms of other politicians are not socialist. They're not even radical. They're truly reformist. Obama's policies have not threatened the power structures of this country in any way. The rich will stay rich. The poor will stay poor. Property of the rich will still be just as protected as it is now. Wars will still be waged on multiple continents. The systemic inequalities that have created a mess for all working people will still exist. But while these reforms, like public option healthcare, are not radical and do not fundamentally change any power relationships, they still remain important bread and butter survival policies for working people just like most of us. Just like people of all races and backgrounds, many white working people have no healthcare. We don't have access to serious medical care when we need it without going bankrupt. While national healthcare is not the answer to all of our problems, and shouldn't be our ultimate goal, it is a short term fix that might at least keep us out of bankruptcy. However, the red flag of socialism has been waved in front of our faces. We can't see anything but the closet communist Obama taunting us and attacking our very way of life with these reforms. And it's this mentality that divides us from non-white working people even more. The vast majority of non-white working people are in support of this healthcare reform. They are in support of social service spending. They are in support of legislation that affects their survival, because they have not been led to believe that they can benefit from siding with the rich like we have. We're divided in a way that is fairly predictable. We would rather protect property rights that are used against us and our interests than work for healthcare and social services that we don't like to admit that we utilize and need sometimes (like unemployment, social security, and Medicare). In our capitalist society, we end up protecting property for the rich, while non-white working people struggle for social services necessary for survival. And thus, we as white working people play for the wrong team. And in the end, only the rich and the politicians come out as winners. Let's be honest. I don't want the government to control healthcare. But I also don't want to live in a property-based society where I'm denied health care because I don't make enough money. Until we get rid of that property-based economic relationship, I'll gladly take social services from the state, just to level the playing field a bit between me and the rich elites and the politicians they provide the contributions to for them to make it into elected office.

Migrants And Other Scapegoats...

Perhaps the most glaring example of how white working people are playing for the wrong team, and how the new Liberty Movement actively works against the liberty of all people, especially non-white people, is the role that the movement plays in the debate on immigration. One of the attacks leveled at the government by the Liberty Movement is the government's failure to secure the border. The faulty logic of our movement becomes quite clear at these times. We have allowed ourselves to be convinced of the ridiculous notion that mostly brown skinned immigrants from Mexico or other countries are our enemy,

that they are somehow stealing our jobs, that they somehow really threaten us. Let's get real. Who's really stealing our jobs? Even with a generous estimate of the number of illegal immigrants working in the U.S. at 6 million (notice I said *working*, not living), this stands in stark contrast to the low-end estimate that nearly 50 million jobs will have been lost to outsourcing by 2015 since NAFTA came into effect in 1994. Well, let's ask ourselves, who's really stealing our jobs? Poor Mexicans? Or rich, mainly white CEOs who move their operations out of the U.S.? Leaders of the new Liberty Movement feed us ridiculous ideas of the "invading" brown hordes, and the rich whites that make up the upper echelons of organizations like the Minutemen and other similar groups salivate over our reactions. If we're busy fighting the Mexicans at the border, and busy trying to round up all the "illegals" then we're too busy to fight the real enemy, that one that keeps eluding us, who we can never seem to win against, the rich and political elite. Most of us that keep falling for these lines initially might mean well. Heck, we only want to defend our families and our communities... but in reality, we're weakening them even more, by fighting our potential allies, and diverting our attention from the real enemy. And why are all these brown skinned immigrants coming here in the first place? Why is there this sudden rush in the last thirteen years to get into this country? 80% of all illegal immigrants have entered since 1994. Why is that? What happened in 1994 that affected working people in Mexico just as it affected us? The passage of NAFTA, a free trade program that benefits nobody but the rich people on both sides of the border! The new Liberty Movement defends the liberty of rich people to own property, while attacking the liberty of brown working class people to move to where they might have a shot at a better life.

We're Failing And Being Used...

The new Liberty Movement is not a failure. It's highly successful for accomplishing what the leaders of this movement want. If our interests as whites more closely mirror those of other working people, the interests of the rich and political elite within our own movement mirror those of the rich and political elite within the government and on Wall Street. The "leaders" of our own movement seek to keep the infighting amongst working people of all backgrounds and colors alive. Again, if we're too busy fighting each other, then we can't fight them. We are being used at these mobilizations to support things that don't benefit us. We're fulfilling our old role of being foot-soldiers for the elite, keeping other poor and working people from getting a chance at a better life. We've been blinded again, just like when we were told that blacks would take our jobs during Jim Crow. How else can we explain the willingness of hundreds of people without healthcare to actively work against legislation that would provide healthcare to them? Or people who rely on Medicare protesting government-run healthcare? And the worst part is that we really don't gain anything from this situation. We're failing ourselves. All of our work within the New Liberty movement, all of our energy, money, and talents are going to reinforce the same predatory economic, political, and social systems that keep us, as white working people, exploited and living in one paycheck away from catastrophe just like non-white working people. Our allegiances to these leaders, to people like Ron Paul, to people like Alex Jones, to people like Lou Dobbs, Rush Limbaugh, Glenn Beck, and Sarah Palin, our acceptance of their white populist talk, our willingness to attack migrants, to disrupt attempts to provide healthcare to people just like us, our willingness to cling to these ideas of the rich man's "liberty," the protection of property and not of people, are the biggest reasons that we are doomed to continue to live this way. We will continue to live paycheck to paycheck (at least those of us that have jobs) and in fear of eviction or foreclosure. We will continue to have to choose between new schoolbooks for our kids or a healthy dinner for our family. We will continue to see our retirement funds looted, our world destroyed, and our family members being killed in wars. And we will continue to not be able to do anything about it, unless we change our strategy and direction.

Moving Forward...

If we as white working people envision a world of safety, freedom, and economic security in our communities, then we must act now. We have to start to identify our allegiances to those in the same economic situation as us, and not those who share our race but are filthy rich. We must create a revolutionary identity that can actively work against all the forms of domination the rich have us carry out, that end up ensuring we will never enjoy true liberty. Migrants and blacks are not our enemies. White rich people are *not* on our side. We must start to work alongside movements of non-white people against all predatory political, economic, and social systems. This means not just working against big government, but also working against capitalism. The state and capitalism are two faces of the same coin, a coin that is used by the rich against us. We also must work actively against white supremacy in all its incarnations. Our future depends on this. **If we as white people want to enjoy freedom, then we must not be used by the rich to deny it to others.** The more we act as foot-soldiers for the rich, the more we ensure that

our own freedom is also unattainable. In the past, our ancestors were tricked into an allegiance to whiteness, to being white. We were made to feel that we can relate to other white people, no matter how poor or rich. They're white like us, and we can identify and feel comfortable with that. So of course, our natural enemies seemed to be non-white people. The problem with this idea is that we've had it wrong for centuries. We've been kept blind to the true nature of what is afoot here, to what is really going on. Look around us. Who fills the trailer parks or rental housing with us? Who works in the factories, service industry, or fast food restaurants with us? Who is beside us working on the construction site of expensive housing we'll never be able to afford? Who is just trying to make a decent, comfortable life for themselves just like us? Is it rich people, especially white rich people? Hell no, it isn't. They have been very comfortable for centuries. They don't need affordable healthcare or social security or Medicare one way or the other. They have the money to live comfortably for the rest of their lives if they never lift another finger. No, it's brown people, black people, red people who are in the same situation as us. So then why would we ever have viewed them as our enemy? Alliances, traditionally, are made by people who have common interests. In an historical sense, white skinned working people have overwhelmingly been convinced that our interests are based on skin color. We have to work for the betterment of the race, for our culture, for our identity. The truth, however, couldn't be further away. Whose interests do these beliefs really serve? White workers? Partially, the answer may be "yes". Working for the advancement of the white race at the cost of other races does buy us small relative privileges and for some, even a few luxuries. In the end, however, the rich benefit much more than we ever do. And those people aren't like us at all except in skin color; they are the elites in our society. We have a lot to gain by creating a new social paradigm and movement that goes beyond the idea of liberty being just a protection for property ownership. We have a direct interest in fighting white supremacy, the government, and capitalism, because all are used by the rich to keep us on the edge of disaster. Our freedom is intimately woven into the freedom of all working people. Until all working people are free, we will never be free as individuals, no matter what skin color we are. I want to end with concrete steps that we can take to work to build a movement for *real* Liberty, the kind that includes our economic security:

- 1) Actively work against groups like the Minutemen, the Klan, the Christian Identity Movement, and others that seek to divide us from other people based on their race, gender, sexuality, nationality or religion. These groups are traitors and ensure that we will never see freedom for ourselves or our families, as they keep us fighting other working people and not the real enemy: the rich. Disrupt their attempts to organize and to recruit. Make it known they are not welcome at gun shows or other events where you are present. Not joining their organizations isn't enough, we must actively stop them from organizing at all. Their diversions are keeping us from getting any closer to true Liberty.
- 2) Actively work against leaders of the New Liberty movement that organize against non-white people. Alex Jones, Ron Paul, David Duke, Lou Dobbs, Glenn Beck and others are trying to ensure that we will turn on migrants and other non-whites rather than turn on rich people, who happen to mostly be white.
- 3) Organize debtor's groups and renters groups in your community. We must come together with our neighbors to defend each other from foreclosures and evictions. Create contact lists of people in your neighborhood that can show up and help defend each other from the bank's attempts at evictions and foreclosures.
- 4) Refuse to pay any debts you "owe" to the rich elites who own almost everything already. Don't pay your hospital bills, your credit card bills, or any other debts you have. Don't give these people that have been exploiting us any more of your money. They have plenty of it already.
- 5) Support soldiers' resistance to war and occupation. Many people just like us are refusing orders to deploy, and resisting the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan in other ways. Lend them your support at couragetoresist.org
- 6) Don't join the military, and help prevent your family members from joining the military. This institution has robbed too many working people of their lives by convincing them it's their patriotic duty. We must stop falling for this line, and go to battle for our own economic security and jobs that don't get us killed, not to help the political elites.
- 7) Follow the examples of other working people and occupy your workplace if threatened with layoffs or terminations. There have been occupations of workplaces in the U.S. and across other countries as the economic crisis has broadened. These reclamations of workplaces have ended with workers receiving back and severance pay, and sometimes even preventing their workplaces from closing.
- 8) Organize with your neighbors to grow food for your communities, or set up connections with local farmers for food. Don't rely on the economic elites for your food any longer. Starting a personal garden is

a good first step, and community gardens can provide even more food and create important community ties and working relationships. Talking to local farmers cuts out the middle man of big agribusiness who cheats both the farmer and the consumer.

9) Be ready to actively defend your neighborhoods, workplaces, and communities from the police and state forces. Take whatever measures you deem necessary to do so. The rich will not let us stop paying them our debts without trying to stop us.

10) Don't get a job as a cop or prison guard. These jobs reinforce racial divisions between people in similar economic conditions, as well as create domestic armies to use against us when we do work toward our own real freedom. Cops are not our friends. The police systemically exist to protect the rich and their property, which is 90% of the law, because the elites wrote the laws! Prison guards are not any better. Especially with the expansion of the war on drugs to include a "war" against Meth, many rural white working people are finding themselves in prison and on the other side of the bars from their neighbors in guard's uniforms. We need rehab and jobs for rural people so they don't get sucked into using or making Meth because it's the only possibility for income or escape.

11) Do anything you can to take back resources from the rich. We'll keep this suggestion intentionally vague. The rich have all the food, all the money, all the wealth, and all the power. Let's take it back. Any way we can.

Spread this article far and wide, and let's get organized to provide the economic security and True Liberty that we deserve!

Comments? Questions? Concerns? Hate mail?

Wishes to collaborate?

ironrail@gmail.com

johnbrown@riseup.net

Resources:

<http://flag.blackened.net>

www.anarchistfaq.org

www.infoshop.org

www.democracynow.org

www.theanarchistlibrary.org

www.anarchistnews.org

www.zmag.org

<http://libcom.org>

www.prole.info

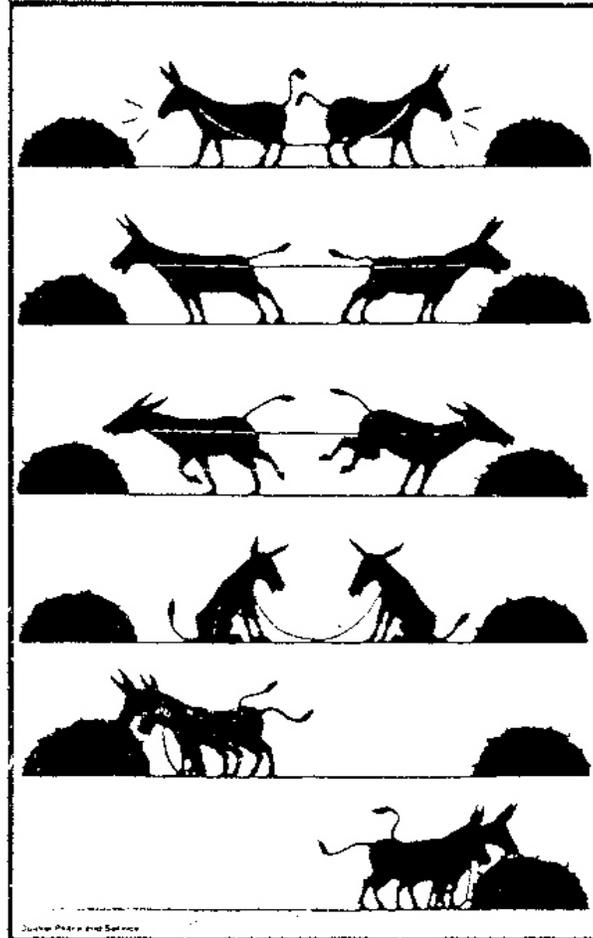
<http://threewayfight.blogspot.com>

www.chomsky.info

www.thetake.org

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Libertarian_socialism

Liberty without equality is inequality and injustice.
Equality without liberty is tyranny and slavery.



Liberty without equality is only one donkey eating.
Equality without liberty is neither donkey eating enough.
Liberty *and* equality is cooperation and autonomy, wherein both donkeys get to eat more because they decide to do it together.

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