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Libertarianism

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The word "libertarian" in the sense of the combination of the word "liberty" and the suffix "-ian" literally means "of or about freedom." It is an antonym of "authoritarian," and the simplest dictionary definition is one who advocates liberty (Simpson and Weiner 1989). But the name "libertarianism" has been adopted by several very different political movements. Property rights advocates have popularized the association of the term with their ideology in the United States and to a lesser extent in other English-speaking countries. But they only began using the term in 1955 (Russell 1955). Before that, and in most of the rest of the world today, the term has been associated almost exclusively with leftists groups advocating egalitarian property rights or even the abolition of private property, such as anarchist socialists who began using the term nearly a century early, in 1858 (Woodcock 1962, p. 281).

This entry distinguishes between three types of libertarianism, left, right, and socialist. It then considers the extent to which the policies of these three diverse groups overlap. The third section focuses on the policies right-libertarians, both because they have popularized their association with the name and because they have a more unified policy agenda.

Libertarianism: left, right, and socialist

At least three distinct groups claim the name "libertarian" today. There is no clearly agreed terminology to distinguish the groups but the terms "left-libertarian," "right-libertarian," and "libertarian socialist" suffice. The three are not factions of a common movement, but distinct ideologies using the same label. Yet, they have a few commonalities.

Libertarian socialism: Libertarian socialists believe that all authority (government or private, dictatorial or democratic) is inherently dangerous and possibly tyrannical. Some endorse the motto: where there is authority, there is no freedom.

Libertarian socialism is also known as "anarchism," "libertarian communism," and "anarchist communism," It has a variety of offshoots including "anarcho-syndicalism," which stresses worker control of enterprises and was very influential in Latin American and in Spain in the 1930s (Rocker 1989 [1938]; Woodcock 1962); "feminist anarchism," which stresses person freedoms (Brown 1993); and "eco-anarchism" (Bookchin 1997), which stresses community control of the local economy and gives libertarian socialism connection with Green and environmental movements.

Modern libertarian socialists include Noam Chomsky (2003; 2004), Murray Bookchin (1986; 1997), Sam Dolgoff (Dolgoff 1986), Daniel Guérin (2005), Colin Ward (1973), and George Woodcock (1962). They take their defining influence from the early socialists who split from the Marxists because of their opposition to the authoritarian aspects of the dictatorship of the proletariat. These thinkers include Pierre Joseph Proudhon (Proudhon 1994), Michael Bakunin (Bakunin 1972), Peter Kropotkin (1995), Rudolf Rocker (Rocker 1989 [1938]), and Emma Goldman (1969 [1911]). To some extent anarchist forbearers also include Max Stirner, Leo Tolstoy, George Orwell, Bertrand Russell, and the early liberal tradition (Woodcock 1962), although some anarchists are hostile to what could be called "bourgeois liberalism."

A guiding principle of libertarian socialism is that all people must have the equal privilege to share in the blessings of liberty, and this principle leads to opposition to unequal property rights. They want to replace the state and the capitalist property rights regime enforced by the state with voluntary mutual aid associations made up of free individuals. They consider centralized authoritarian socialism, such as the regimes that took power in Russia and China, to be another form of state oppression.

Anarchists are a diverse group who put great stress on individual initiative and action. Therefore, it is hard to determine the libertarian socialist position on many specific issues. Some libertarian socialists oppose political action to further social reform within the prevailing system of government authority, and prefer only direct action that works outside of government authority. All libertarian socialists want radical social reform and the fewest possible restrictions on human behavior. All want to end the state and private property as we know them, and replace it with some kind of non-hierarchical decentralized coordination system that allows for voluntary mutual aid so that all people have the same access to use the means of production toward their own ends (Bookchin 1997; Chomsky 2003; Heider 1994; Rocker 1989 [1938]; Woodcock 1962).

The question of how this is to be done has nearly as many answers as there are anarchists. Some want worker control of factories. Some want community control of local economies. Some place great stress on gender and ethnic equality, sexual freedom, and personal and cultural freedom. Some place great stress on environmental protection. Some see worker control and economic equality as the primary means of establishing most other kinds of personal freedom.

Libertarian socialist action today is embodied in the creation of nongovernmental organizations and networks aimed at mutual aid and sharing. Communes in rural and urban settings around the world are an aspect of anarchist actions. Workers cooperatives, such as the Mondragon in Spain, further a libertarian socialist agenda, as do consumer cooperatives. The sharing of software and information on the internet can been seen as a libertarian direct action.

Libertarian socialists have succeeding in having some influence over left-of-center economists who are more closely associated with Marxian economics. For example, Samuel Bowles, David M. Gordon, and Thomas E. Weisskopf (1983, p 261-290) propose "An Economic Bill of Rights." which is not strictly libertarian socialist because it works within existing state structures. However, its content—including rights to a democratic workplace and democratic rights for the people to chart their economic futures—have incorporated much of the libertarian socialist agenda.

Right-libertarianism: Right-libertarians believe in strong private property rights and/or an unregulated market economy with little or no redistribution of property. They are also known as "free-market advocates," "property rights advocates," or "Neoliberals" The most extreme version of right-libertarianism, "anarcho-capitalism," advocates virtually unlimited private property rights. Right-libertarians seldom call themselves right-libertarians, preferring to call themselves simply "libertarians," often denying any other groups have claim to the name. It is perhaps poetically appropriate that property rights advocates have appropriated a term that was already being used by people who subscribe to the idea that property is theft, and that these property rights now

accuse anarchists of trying to steal it from them.

Modern right-libertarian thinkers include a large number of economists, philosophers, and political pundits, such as Milton Friedman (1962; 1980), James Buchanan (1975), Robert Nozick (1974), Eric Mack (1990; 1993; 1995), Jan Narveson (1988; 1998), Israel Kirzner (1981; 1989), William Niskanen (2003), Murray Rothbard (1978; 1982), and Michael Tanner (1996). They take defining influence from such thinkers Ludwig Von Mises (1927; 1963 [1949]), F. A. Hayek (1944; 1960), and the later writings of Herbert Spencer (1872; 1901). They sometimes call themselves "classical liberals" and claim to be the heirs of early liberals such as Thomas Hobbes (1962), John Locke (1960), Adam Smith (1976 [1776]), and John Stuart Mill (1859). However, the modern right-libertarian defense of private property is so radical as to be in opposition to the views of property held by nearly all classical liberals, and some liberals argue that right-libertarianism has strayed from the essential characteristics of liberalism (Freeman 2001).

Most right-libertarians use an ethical argument based on natural property rights to support their market policy prescriptions. Right-libertarians promote liberty as negative liberty or freedom as noninterference (Berlin 1969). That is, a person is free to do whatever no other person prevents her from doing whether or not she is actually able to do it. In the sense, a person is free to fly by flapping her arms even though she is unable to do it. Right-libertarian freedom is also often expressed as self-ownership—the belief that every adult individual owns herself and no one can take away her rights over herself away without her consent (Cohen 1995; Locke 1960; Nozick 1974; Otsuka 2003). Self-ownership does not mean that people naturally treat themselves as property; it means instead that every individual is free from being treated as the property of another person. A self-owner determines what he or she will do.

Although libertarian socialists and right-libertarians agree about their skepticism of state authority, they have diametrically opposite views of property. Libertarian socialists oppose state authority largely because they see it as the source of property rights; right-libertarians oppose state authority because they see it as the enemy of private property rights (Heider 1994, p. 95). Right-libertarians combine the belief that all individuals have strong self-ownership rights with the belief that individuals have the responsibility to respect preexisting claims to private property in natural resources even if these claims are unequally and unfairly divided. According to right-libertarians, unowned natural resources are essentially up for grabs. But once someone appropriates them as private property, the owner's rights are extremely strong and ever lasting. Owners have little or no responsibility to share with those who have no property. In some right-libertarian theories, individuals' claims of property ownership are as strong as individuals' claims of self-ownership (Feser 2005; Narveson 1988; Nozick 1974; Wheeler 2000). In contrast to the views of libertarian socialists any attempt by the government or any other authority to ensure that everyone has access to property is unjustified interference with the natural right of property. Government authority, if it should exist at all, must be limited to protecting property and self-ownership rights.

The term right-libertarian also applies to those who believe that the government should be similarly limited for pragmatic or utilitarian reasons, although this is usually considered to be a less important argument for right-libertarianism policies. Unlike

libertarian socialism, which leads to diverse political objectives of its adherents, right-libertarianism is easily identifiable with moderate and strict policy prescriptions on nearly all issues.

Left-libertarianism: According to Peter Valentine (2000), left-libertarians combine a belief that all individuals have the right to strong self-ownership with a belief in some kind of egalitarian right of ownership of natural resources. They share the belief with libertarian socialist that an equal right to be free implies an equal right of access to (or ownership of) natural resources (Gibbard 2000; Otsuka 2003; Steiner 1994; Vallentyne 2000), but they propose a more individualist solution. Rather than wanting to abolish private ownership of property, left-libertarians want to equalize private holdings of natural resources, or at least tax private holdings of natural resources in some way to ensure that all individuals have equal access to their benefits.

Use of the term "left-libertarian" for this group in particular is slightly overly specific because libertarian socialists are also on the left of the political spectrum. The term "left-libertarian" is sometimes used as a generic term for the two groups of libertarians on the left. However, "left-libertarianism" is mostly commonly used for the combination self-ownership with resource equality, and it is what this group usually calls itself, while the other main group in the libertarians left more often use the terms "libertarian socialist" or "anarchist."

Left-libertarians take their defining influence from thinkers such as Thomas Paine (1797), Thomas Spence (2000 [1793]), the early writings Herbert Spencer (1872), Henry George (1976), and Leon Walras (2000 [1896]). They take a great deal of influence from the early liberal movement and some influence from both of the other two libertarian movements. Modern left-libertarian thinkers include Hillel Steiner (1992; 1994), Michael Otsuka (1998; 2003), Peter Vallentyne (2000; 2003), Nicolaus Tideman (1982; 1997; 2000; 2004), and Philippe Van Parijs (1995). The term, "Georgist" refers to a subset of left-libertarians who accept Henry George's positive economic theories about the efficiency of a land tax and the causal role of rent in the business cycle (George 1976), but most left-libertarians are not Georgists and they tend to consider their ideology as primarily normative. There is a connection between some forms of left-libertarianism and Green, environmentalist, and libertarian socialist ideologies, but many of these groups do not accept the left-libertarian thesis of self-ownership.

Left-libertarians, like libertarian socialists, are such a diverse group that it is hard to define the left-libertarian position on many issues. However, unlike libertarian socialists, left-libertarians are largely defined by one policy issue. Although they differ on how resource equality should be achieved and on what resources should be equalized, they are united by the search for some version of resource equality.

The best known left-libertarian policy prescription is the belief that the government must tax away 100% of the resource value of land and other fixed assets, and every individual is entitled to one share of whatever benefits are derived from that revenue (George 1976; Paine 1797; Steiner 1994). Property holders would pay a tax to the state equal to the rental value of a vacant lot on the site of their property. For these left-libertarians, the private individual or business attains the right to hold a natural resource by paying the full market value of the resource in its raw state to the government as

representative of everyone else, but the value of the efforts and improvements they put into their holding are private property at least for the life of the owner. This form of left-libertarianism leads essentially to a market economy on stated-owned, privately rented land.

Left-libertarians do not necessarily agree about what the government should do with the revenue from such a tax. Some believe that it should be used for public purposes, such as defense, police, courts, parks, healthcare, and anything else that benefits the community (George 1976; Steiner 1994). Others argue that it should be redistributed in cash as an basic income—a cash income unconditionally paid to everyone (Steiner 1992; Van Parijs 1995). Under the equal-shares version, each person receives one share of the rental price of all natural resources in cash, as if she owned one share in a giant real estate holding firm the distributed all of its profits in dividends. Others argue that an equal claim to natural exists, but it confers only the right to *work* with resources or the right to employment (Van Donselaar 2003).

Left-libertarians disagree about when to stop taxing. Some believe that although it is imperative that the government tax 100% of the land and natural resource rights, respect for self-ownership prohibits almost all other kinds of taxation, most especially income and sales taxes (Vallentyne 2007). However, most argue that inheritance should also be taxed either because assets are abandoned at the point of death (Steiner 1992), or because there is nothing a person or a group can do to impose their claims to any asset on future generation (Widerquist 2006). Others add taxes on monopolies and income derived from any market disequilibria, such as efficiency wages and insider advantages (Van Parijs 1995).

The basic left-libertarian judgment about resource ownership could be paired with any other type of policy. Some left-libertarians appear otherwise very close to right-libertarians; others consider themselves to be both left-libertarians and libertarian socialists. Philippe Van Parijs uses left-libertarian premises in an argument for an extremely activist welfare state (Van Parijs 1995).

Are any policies common to all libertarians, left, right, and socialist?

Although all three movements have roots in the liberal tradition, they do not stem from a common branch off of that tradition, and there is a great deal of mutual animosity at least between right-libertarians and the other two groups. Perhaps Max Stirner (1971 [1845]) is common to the three movements, but he is not a central figure for any of them, and some in each group would deny his influence. As different as these groups are, they do have some beliefs in common. They all put a high priority on protecting their (conflicting) conceptions of liberty, and they are all skeptical of authority. All advocate strict limits on government authority, sometimes to the point of advocating its complete abolition.

Tendency to anarchy: Neither anarcho-syndicalists and anarcho-capitalists do not see the absence of government as the absence of coordination. Anarcho-capitalists, led by Murray Rothbard (1978), see anarchy as a private property economy in which owners protect their property with private security forces hire private arbitrators to settle their disputes rather than relying on government courts. Anarcho-syndicalists and eco-anarchists see anarchy as the breakdown of government protection of property rights. Workers take control of factories, or neighborhoods take control of the local

economy, eliciting only voluntary participation from individuals (Bakunin 1972; Goldman 1969 [1911]; Guerin 2005; Rocker 1989 [1938]).

Deference to individual choice: Left- and right-libertarians endorse J. S. Mill's harm principle as the guiding principle of government (Mill 1859). Enforceable duties can be summarized as one duty not to harm each other. The sole justifiable use of government's coercive power is to defend individuals from harm imposed by others. Because left- and right-libertarians posit very different property rights, they have very different conceptions of what constitutes harm, and the similarity in how they apply this principle is limited, and applies mostly to areas in which property is not directly involved.

Libertarians of all stripes tend to differ to individual choice and oppose laws motivated by paternalism, laws that require one person to actively aid another, and laws that are designed to promote a particular kind of lifestyle. Anti-paternalism implies opposition to drug prohibition and to individual safety regulations such as seatbelt and helmet laws, and to sin taxes such as alcohol and cigarette taxes to the extent that those taxes are designed to protect the consumer from harming herself rather than to prevent the consumer from imposing harm on others.

Prohibition of forcing one person to actively aid another implies opposition to the military draft and possibly to mandatory voting, jury duty, and Good Samaritan laws. Right-libertarians and libertarian socialists have worked together against war and the military draft (Heider 1994, pp. 93-94).

Right-libertarians believe redistributive taxation constitutes forcing one person to aid another, but left-libertarians and libertarian socialists believe that unequal property rights in natural resources without compensation constitute forced aid *from poor to the rich*. They believe collective ownership of resources (and perhaps the means of production) gives them great leeway to make sure that no one is needy without forcing anyone to aid anyone else. A few right-libertarians have give tentative approval to the idea that taxation of resources as at least more acceptable than other forms of taxation (Pollock 1996).

Neutrality between lifestyles implies a very liberal outlook on social issues. Minorities as defined by sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, and politics must have the same access to public facilities and the same rights of free speech, contract, freedom of expression as everyone else. Even some right-libertarian think-tanks have come out for gay marriage (Epstein 2004). However, right-libertarian defense of property often allows private discrimination. The business owner's right to property entails the right to refuse to do business with anyone else even if that decision is based on bigotry (Murray 1997). Similarly, all three groups tend toward unconditional defense of free speech, but many right-libertarians believe that employers may discriminate against employees based on their speech, their political activities, or any other reason they choose.

Child protection: Anti-paternalism applies only adults. With the exception of the most radical right-libertarians most libertarians accept that the government or the community has a role in protecting children, which can include protection against child abuse, prohibitions on child labor, mandating education attendance. However, libertarians would argue that the government should defer to parents unless there is strong evidence of wrong-doing. Rather than publishing a list of

regulations for how all parents should behave, government protection of children should be limited to protecting children from clearly unfit parents.

Abortion: Abortion divides libertarians as much as it divides everyone else. Some libertarians view the prohibition of abortion as one group's attempt to force their lifestyle on other groups. Other libertarians, particularly right-libertarians, claim that the fetus's right to self-ownership implies that all abortion must be illegal (Gordon 1999). However, a self-ownership argument can be made in the opposite direction. That is, a prohibition on abortion amounts to forcing the pregnant woman to aid the fetus against her will, violating her self-ownership (Narveson 1988; Thomson 1971).

Most libertarian socialists believe that no government authority has the right to prevent a woman from having an abortion, but some more radical anarchists believe that instead of taking political action in favor of legal recognition of that right, an individual's time would be better spent helping women obtain abortions, or working to subvert a government that assumes overreaching authority.

Immigration: The three groups of libertarians tend to support open immigration but for slightly different reasons. The left-libertarian and libertarian socialist belief in egalitarian ownership of the Earth makes it difficult to exclude anyone from immigration. However, left-libertarians might believe one nation can exclude immigrants as long as individuals on both sides of the border have equal access to the use of (or the value of) the world's resources. Some libertarian socialists have been known to give aid to so-called illegal aliens.

Right-libertarians could say that one group of people has a right to certain land, and another does not, but under right-libertarianism nearly all rights occur at the individual level. Therefore, if any one person within a nation wants to hire, or rent a dwelling to, a foreigner, no one else has the right to interfere. A few libertarians have found excuses to overcome this implication of their principles (Hoppe 1998), but most do not (Block and Callahan 2003).

Right-libertarian policies

Even within right-libertarianism, there is a large disagreement about how minimal the minimal state should be. The most extreme version, anarcho-capitalism, is discussed above. More commonly, however, right-libertarians argue for the minimal taxation necessary to support the protection of self-ownership and property ownership (Narveson 1988; Nozick 1974). This version of the right-libertarian government is often called the "night watchman state," because the government is essentially limited to a security role. It can justifiably tax individuals to support police, courts, defense, and not much else. However, there is some difficulty in determining exactly what level of spending on police, courts, and defense constitutes the minimum necessary to defend individual rights. A large part of the military budget, especially in a powerful nation such as the United States is not strictly limited to defending the nation from invasion. Many people who otherwise espouse right-libertarian economic policies also espouse hawkish military policy, but the right-libertarian position is for a small military that does only the minimum necessary to defend the nation from attack, and only that which is genuinely in the interests of the vast majority of individuals (Rothbard 1978).

Of course, even the functions of defense, police, and courts are justified by the market's failure to deliver these goods without government intervention (Nozick 1974). But market failure arguments exist for almost anything an activist government might want to provide including public parks, roads, and highways; libraries, the post office, public education; healthcare; regulation of industry; social safety nets; and breaking up monopolies. Thus there are many different kinds of right-libertarianism depending on where and how one draws the line of a market-failure argument for government action. Some make strict rights-based arguments against nearly all government action (Narveson 1988; Rothbard 1978), and others merely look for market-based solutions to popular government goals (Friedman 1962; 1980).

Redistribution: While a radical change in the property rights regime is essential to left-libertarianism and libertarian socialism, it is anathema to strict right-libertarianism for reasons discussed above. However, some right-libertarians have given provisional support to limited redistribution of income either for practical or charitable reasons or because they see it as a political inevitability. There is some connection between the three libertarian groups in the strategy for redistribution. Right-libertarians who accept redistribution tend to favor some kind of basic income or negative income tax (Friedman 1962; 1968; 1980; Hayek 1956; Murray 2006; Steiner 1992; Van Parijs 1995), as do some left-libertarians (Steiner 1992; Van Parijs 1995), and some elements in the libertarian socialist movement (Heider 1994, pp. 66). The libertarian appeal of basic income is that it is a simple policy that is minimally intrusive in the lives of the poor. The government doesn't hire a large number of administers or social workers to supervise the poor or the find work for them, it simply transfers money from one group to another.

Education: A strict right-libertarian education policy would be none at all except perhaps a law mandating that parents find some way to educate their children. However, given that mandatory public education is so overwhelmingly popular many right-libertarians have searched for a market-based policy that achieves public education's goal. In 1962, Milton Friedman proposed a "voucher plan" for schools in which parents would receive a certain amount of money from the state that could be used at any private or parochial school whether for profit or not (Friedman 1962). Although the state still pays for education, this program is right-libertarian in the sense that parents would have a choice in a market of schools. Although this program has not been fully implemented in any jurisdiction, elements of it have been incorporated into "school choice" initiatives around the United States and the world; something like it exists in the Netherlands; and the idea continues to gain momentum among right-libertarians and conservatives (Enlow and Ealy 2006; Salisbury and Tooley 2005).

Healthcare: Although economic theory has produced strong arguments for the existence market failure in the healthcare industry, and although others see a strong equity argument for free healthcare, a strict right-libertarian policy would be to remove all government involvement from the industry by deregulation, ending special tax deductions for medical benefits, and ending government programs such as nationalized healthcare in most of the developed world and Medicare and Medicaid in the United States. Individuals would then have to try to solve

the market failure problems without government assistance, and those who cannot afford it would seek it through the charity of the wealthy. However, if that is not politically feasible, right-libertarians such as Charles Murray have proposed something like Friedman's voucher plan for healthcare. Murray proposes that the government give each individual $3,000 per year that she must spend on health insurance in a heavily deregulated market (Murray 2006). Thus, the government would pay for everyone's basic healthcare, but consumers would have a choice in a market for health insurance.

Macroeconomic Policy: Right-libertarians tend to advocate (small c) conservative macroeconomic policies. A few go so far as to say that the government should privatize the central bank or return to a gold standard, but most accept the argument that a familiar state-run central bank is necessary. However, right-libertarians argue that the government should not pursue an activist counter-cyclical monetary policy but should aim for a stable money supply (Friedman and Friedman 1980; Friedman and Schwartz 1963).

Most right-libertarians wish for a government that is too small to make a counter-cyclical fiscal policy a realistic possibility even if it were desirable. The usual right-libertarian solution to recessions is to avoid causing them by sudden shifts in government monetary and fiscal policy, by removing government barriers to market functioning, and by letting the economic cycle work itself out. Often right-libertarians see the business cycle as part of the natural course of economic growth, which cannot be stopped without reducing its long-run benefits. According to right-libertarians, the best solution to unemployment is to remove government programs such as labor regulations, health and safety regulations, unemployment insurance, and minimum wage laws, all of which they see as something that might prevent firms from hiring as many workers as they might otherwise.

International Trade: Right-libertarians tend to favor free international trade and to support the unilateral elimination of all tariffs and quotas on imports and all subsidies for exports. The usual nationalistic arguments for government protection of home industry (such as self-sufficiency and support of local industries or wage rates) all oppose right-libertarian principles of property ownership and free exchange. However, more recent arguments for international trade restrictions have the potential to justify them on libertarian terms. Thomas Pogge (2002), for example, argues that much of the industrialized world's trade with lesser developed nations is not characterized by the free exchange of property between rightful owners. Many lesser developed countries are run by dictators who essentially use government authority to steal property from their citizens and sell it to the corporations of the industrialized world. This argument seems to make a libertarian case for restricted trade with (or even an embargo of) undemocratic countries, but the argument does not seem to have penetrated right-libertarian circles. The more common right-libertarian view of international trade is that commerce with any nation is good and it will eventually benefit everyone.

Is right-libertarianism right-wing? Strict right-libertarian policies on economic inequality, healthcare, education, and other issues give it an elitist, right-wing character, and justifies the rightist designation. However, some right-libertarian policies are clearly distinct from right-wing conservatism.

For example, Murray Rothbard is highly critical of militarism and the war on drugs, "That is a beautiful war, because they can never win it. It is a perfect war from the point of view of the state" (Interviewed by Heider 1994, p. 95). Many of Rothbard's followers would say the same about the war on terrorism.

Policies in which strict right-libertarianism conflicts with conservatism include not only the social policies they share with the libertarian left but also many right-libertarian economic policies. For example, some American conservatives espouse right-libertarian rhetoric to argue against government subsidies for passenger rail, but right-libertarianism, consistently applied, would actually lead to an enormous expansion of passenger rail at the expense of most other forms of transportation, which receive enormous government subsidies. Not only would the government have to stop subsidizing jet fuel, it would also have to sell government owned airports and the air traffic control system. Indirect automobile subsidies would also have to go, including free roads, streets, highways, public parking, and traffic lights, not to mention direct subsides for oil drilling, for pipelines, and for dictators in oil-producing nations. A few right-libertarians make a strange exception by supporting the government provision of roads (Murray 1997), but most libertarians believe that it is no more reasonable for a government to provide a free road to every person who wants to drive a car on it, than it is to provide a free rail line to every person who wants to drive a locomotive on it.

Part of the reason right-libertarianism is considered to be a right-wing doctrine is the alliance between right-libertarians and religious and authoritarian conservatives in the Republican Party in the United States. Many people espouse right-libertarian arguments against the redistribution of income, minimum wages, and government regulation of industry while simultaneously espousing distinctly un-libertarian arguments on issues such as gay rights, drugs, religion, militarism, and free expression. This view could reflect a willingness among right-libertarians to sacrifice these issues to find allies on their most cherished economic issues, or it could reflect the appeal of right-libertarian economic ideas with conservatives. Of course, the combination of market economics with social conservatism (Gilder 1981; Mead 1986; 1992; 1997) is an ideology of its own, which seems to be coalescing under the name of "neo-conservatism;" it is not, however, a form of libertarianism.

Histories

For history and interpretation of liberalism see Freeden (1996), Gaus and Courtland (2003), and Manet (1994). For the history and philosophical foundations of right-libertarianism see Boaz (1997), Machan (1974; 1982), and Vallentyne (2006). For the history of left-libertarianism see Vallentyne and Steiner (2000); for the philosophical debate between left- and right-libertarianism see Vallentyne and Steiner (2000b). For the history of libertarian socialism see Guérin (2005), Nettlau (1996), Ward (2004), and Woodcock (1962).

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