

A Brief Political Diatribe

Ghaffar Khan Society

June 27, 2007

Some say it was Thoreau, others old Tom Jefferson, and still others Thomas Paine; but whoever said “that government governs best which governs least” spoke words with which I heartily concur. In fact, I embrace the so-called “Anarchist” ideal that every human being ought to be brought up to take responsibility for himself/herself and his/her dependents, and to have enough sense to recognize that the limits to one’s own rights and freedoms are the rights and freedoms of others—which it is each individual’s responsibility to look out for. Fully self-actualized human beings know how to play together cooperatively and to care for one another.

Unfortunately, I am painfully aware that fully self-actualized human beings are the exception and not the rule. The rule is that most adults are really still babies in big bodies and, left to their own devices, will not place a premium on the rights of others. The “golden rule” just never seems to sink very deep into the average individual’s psyche.

But even if we were to achieve a society of fully self-actualized human beings, there would still be situations of conflict in need of mediation and that mediation, even if temporary, would represent a form of governance. So, “pure” Anarchism (what is rightly termed “libertarian socialism”) is best understood, in my view, as a worthy ideal but not one that anyone should hold their breath for. Marx jousted with the Anarchists of his day, but his concept of the “withering away” of the State was an approximation of their ideal—deny it though doctrinaire Marxists may.

So where does that leave us? It leaves us to minimizing the role of government in particular ways. The first step would be to dismantle the military-industrial complex that has seized the reigns of governance in the United States. If there is to be any kind of standing army, it should be a sort of “peace corps”—not sent abroad, but kept at home where it has its work cut out for it rebuilding the infrastructure of this country. This would be an “army” in the sense of a disciplined organization—but it cannot be armed and it must in fact be trained in the philosophy and tactics of non-violence.

The second step would be to change the direction of wealth re-distribution in this country. One of the great canards that the average American is wont to mindlessly repeat is that there is no systematic re-distribution of wealth in the United States—that’s what the Communists were up to.

The Internal Revenue Code is, in fact, the legal basis upon which the United States government re-distributes wealth. Political lobbying is a second basis. The re-distribution has been steadily moving in the wrong direction throughout my lifetime—from the “have nots” to the

“haves.” Those who have been paying attention recognize that corporate welfare (not “Horatio Alger” bootstrapping) is what underwrites the great financial success stories of our time. We need to reverse the direction of the money flows towards the creation of a “commonwealth” society.

Third, political “trust-busting.” The Republicrat-Democan mono-party (or politburo) has a stranglehold upon this caricature of a democracy we call the American Republic. It is time for a non-violent people’s revolution to seize power and convene a Constitutional convention that will write a multi-party parliamentary system into federal law. As Americans, we deserve a “political spectrum” that IS a spectrum in more than name only.

So far, this may not sound as if I have reduced the role of government in our lives very much but I would argue that the dismantling of the military-industrial complex as it presently stands is, in effect, the dissolution of government as we have come to know it. The Federal bureaucracy would indeed whither away as the bulldozers decimate the Pentagon and its operatives on K Street are conscripted into the peace corps to see if they can be morally rehabilitated. Wealth would return to the individual states which would operate once again as a confederation of republics. The role of the Federal government would be mainly to coordinate the efforts of these republics to behave like fully self-actualized human beings and not self-centered babies in big bodies.

Enough dreaming. We need to get to work...I would encourage any reader still awake to read the late, great, Richard Rorty’s “Achieving Our Country.”

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