

Letter to *Freedom* (November 14, 1970)

That was Freedom Day

Ken Knudson

November 14, 1970

To the Editors,

In the lead article of the October 17 *FREEDOM*, Jack Robinson takes issue with the so-called ‘anarcho-capitalists who believe that given freedom for private enterprise and the abolition of the state, free enterprise will run society to man’s benefit’. Although I wouldn’t call myself an ‘anarcho-capitalist’ I do accept Mr. Robinson’s description of them as my own and would like very much to reply to his insinuation that free enterprise implies ‘exploitation of man by man and in itself is hostile to freedom’.

First let me look at the term ‘anarcho-capitalist’. This, it seems to me, is just an attempt to slander the individualist-anarchists by using a supercharged word like ‘capitalist’ in much the same way as the word ‘anarchy’ is popularly used to mean chaos and disorder. No one to my knowledge accepts the anarcho-capitalist label, just as no one up to the time of Proudhon’s memoir on property in 1840 accepted the anarchist label. But, unlike Proudhon who could call himself an anarchist by stripping the word of its derogatory connotation and looking at its real **meaning**, no one can logically call himself an anarcho-capitalist for the simple reason that it’s a contradiction in terms: anarchists seek the abolition of the state while capitalism is inherently dependent upon the state. Without the state, capitalism would inevitably fall, for capitalism rests on the pillars of government privilege. Because of government a privileged minority can monopolize land, limit credit, restrict exchange, give idle capital the power to increase, and, through interest, rent, profit, and taxes, rob industrious labour of its products.

But I don’t have to convince anarchists that government is hostile to labour. We all know that. What we all apparently **don’t** know is that freedom in enterprise **is** favourable to labour. Unfortunately this idea is so foreign to today’s world that I couldn’t possibly hope to change people’s minds in the few sentences space imitations impose. Suffice it to note that this myth has so permeated society that even the government most identified with ‘free enterprise’ (the United States) takes annually an average of £2,000 from each and every family inside its borders. (This is **not** a misprint—it’s a fact!) What an incentive for private enterprise if that state were abolished and the money taken from the people could be used **by** the people in whatever way they saw fit.

But Mr. Robinson says that free enterprise is hostile to freedom. Why? What other kind of enterprise would Mr. Robinson suggest if not free. Communal? Fine! Just so long as it’s voluntary. But then of course it’s free. Unfortunately anarchist - communism wouldn’t permit that. One

doesn't have to read very far into Kropotkin or Bakunin to see that the individual **must** succumb to the collective will. Communal property for the common benefit—it sounds more like *1984* than anarchism to me.

Yours truly,

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KEN KNUDSON

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Retrieved 01/14/2024 from freedomnews.org.uk
Printed in *Freedom*, November 14 1970 Vol 31 No 35, in response to Jack Robinson's article
"That was Freedom Day", printed in No 32 (October 17).

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