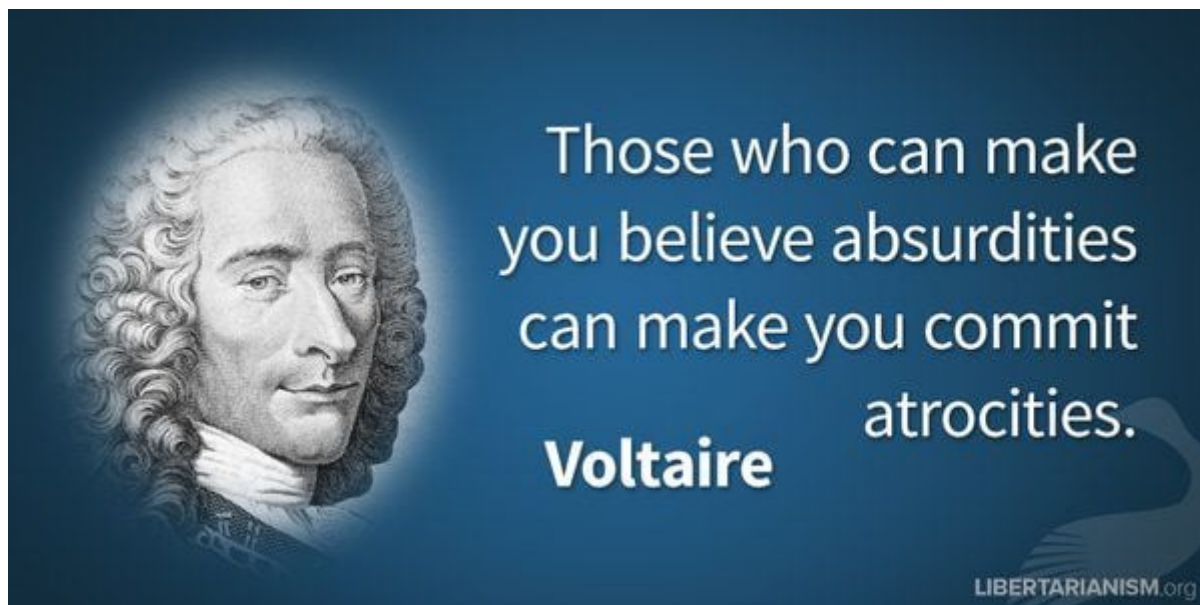


Fighting Totalitarianism: Rothbard versus Monasticism

by Michael Rectenwald



I have been quite explicit that what we are now dealing with under the covid response, woke ideology, cancel culture, Big Tech censorship, nonstop media propaganda and gaslighting, an armed and barricaded capitol, a Democratic-controlled government set on giving away money and allowing unfettered immigration, the abrogation of religious expression and association, the forcing of perverse values down our throats, the demand that we deny the reality of our senses and avow utter absurdities—the list could go on—is totalitarianism.

In pointing to and railing at these evils, I have not hesitated to call their combination as a totalitarian creep turned into a totalitarian dash. The speed at which liberty has been infringed has been astonishing. I saw it coming years ago, when I faced the woke mob at New York University. I knew that behind the crazed social justice activists who denounced me and ruined my academic career merely for criticizing their insanity was a neo-Stalinism on the rise. Now, here we are.

In calling these developments totalitarianism, some have suggested, at least by their silence, that my pronouncements have been exaggerated. To them I answer, sometimes by implication and otherwise, by continuing to call it as I see it: I'd rather be wrong than sorry. I've been willing to risk my reputation by crying wolf when indeed I see a wolf.

Today, the state is like a cell that includes most large corporations. We're witnessing a startling merging of corporate and government power set on enforcing their rule. Technically, this is fascism. But since the ideology and rhetoric are not fascist *per se* but socialist and "woke," I've resisted that label and struggled to name it otherwise. I've called it "corporate socialism" because, unlike fascism, it is antinativist and antinationalist; it is internationalist, corporatist, and socialist at once: international fascism, if you will. Yes, I know that fascism developed directly out of Marxist socialism, that Mussolini was a leading socialist before becoming a fascist, that Italy was taken up as a national "proletariat," and so forth. But the socialist and woke rhetoric and ideology are neo-Marxist. Joe Biden is a mere ink pen being wielded by corporate socialists to enact their agenda.

Without the nucleus of the cell, that is, the government, this extended state would not exist. But there can be no doubt that the state now exceeds the government, although it could not exist without the government. But the cell is more than its nucleus. It now includes corporations that act as its enforcement agents. Consider for example the way that corporate institutions are now not only complying with the covid crisis precepts but actively enforcing them. They are doing the same with all of the other Great Reset precepts.

Some libertarians have suggested that the solution to this crisis is merely to retreat and decentralize—ignore the statists, form local libertarian enclaves, turn your back on the enemy. While I agree that decentralization is a goal, I

counter this suggestion with a simple retort: tell that to the IRS. Say that when they show up to enforce a mandatory vaccine. Tell that to the Hungarians who faced the Stalinist tanks. Or tell that to those sent to the gulag in the Soviet Union. What I mean is that totalitarians won't let you out. They are dead set upon subjecting you.

How would Murray Rothbard have responded to the pernicious developments that we face? I think his answer is contained in the essay "[On Resisting Evil](#)." There he argues that retreatism is worse than selling out, that it isn't enough to secede, to become libertarian monks, as it were. Such monasticism would amount not only to seceding but also to ceding everything worth saving to the monsters. Unlike Voltaire, whose answer to the Inquisition and other horrors in *Candide* was, "We must cultivate our garden," Rothbard's solution was to fight to rid the monsters from our land; otherwise, while we might have a small, parallel garden, the rest of the world will live in a veritable concentration camp.

So, let us call out the enemy for what it is: totalitarianism. Let us not retreat. Let us fight for the land. And let us spread the garden across the earth, not merely carving out some small islands for ourselves, which, after all, may be impossible.

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