

# The Role of the Property and Freedom Society in a Crazy World

by Hans-Hermann Hoppe\*

WE LIVE IN THE AGE of the American Empire. This Empire may be crumbling, but for the foreseeable future it will last, not only because of its military might but, more importantly, because of its ideological power. For the American Empire has accomplished something truly remarkable: that its core beliefs are internalized in the minds of most people as intellectual taboos. To be sure, all governments rest on aggressive violence and the U.S. government is no exception. It, too, does not hesitate to crush anyone resisting its legislative whims. However, the U.S. government needs astonishing little actual violence to achieve submission to its commands, because the overwhelming majority of the population and in particular of the opinion-molding intellectuals has adopted the value- and belief-system that underlies the American Empire as its very own.

According to the official, U.S. approved belief-system, we are all intelligent and reasonable people confronted with the same hard reality and committed to the facts and the truth. True enough, even at the center of the American Empire, in the U.S., people do not live in the best of all possible worlds. There are still many defects to be fixed. However, with the American system of democratic government, mankind has definitely found the perfect institutional framework allowing for continuous progress on the way toward an ever more perfect world; and if only the American system of democracy is adopted on a world-wide scale, the path to perfection is everywhere clear and open.

The only truly legitimate form of government is democracy. Any other form of government is inferior. There exist monarchies, dictatorships and theocracies, and there exist feudal land-lords and war-lords; and since any government is to be preferred to no government at all, democratic governments must, out of necessity, at times cooperate with other, non-democratic governments. Ultimately, however, all governments must be changed according to the American ideal, because only democracy allows for peaceful change and continuous progress.

Democratic governments such as the US and its European allies are inherently peaceful and do not wage war against each other. If they must wage war at all, their wars are wars of defense against aggressive non-democratic regimes, i.e., just wars. Thus, all countries and territories currently occupied by American troops or those of

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its European allies have been guilty of aggression, and their occupation by foreign troops is an act of self-defense and of liberation on the part of the democratic West. The aggressiveness of the Islamic world in particular is proven by the very fact that large parts of it are under American-Western occupation and more areas still are provoking such liberating occupation.

Democratic governments are of the people, by the people and for the people. In democracies no one rules over anyone, but the people rule themselves and are hence free. Taxes are contributions and payments for services rendered by government; and tax-evaders are accordingly thieves, who take without paying. Harboring fugitive thieves is then an act of aggression against the people from whom they try to flee.

Private property, markets and profit-making are good and useful institutions, but democratic government must see to it, through proper legislation, that private property and profits are acquired and used in a socially responsible way and that markets function efficiently. Moreover, markets and profit-motivated business cannot produce public goods and thus satisfy social needs, and they cannot take care of the truly needy. Social needs and the needy can be taken care of only by government. Government alone, through the funding of public goods and support given to the needy, can enhance the public welfare and reduce if not eliminate the neediness and number of the needy.

In particular, government social policy must control the private vice of greed and profiteering. Greed and profiteering were also the root cause of the present economic crisis. Reckless financiers created an irrational exuberance in the public that has finally foundered on reality. The market manifestly failed, and only government stood ready to save the situation; and only government, through proper regulation and supervision of the banking industry and financial markets, can prevent anything like this from ever happening again. Banks and businesses went bankrupt. But governments and their central banks stood tall and protected savers' money and workers' jobs.

Advised by the best and best-paid economists in the world, governments have discovered the cause of the crisis and determined that to get out of the current economic mess people must both consume more and invest more. Every penny hoarded under the mattress is a penny withheld from present consumption and investment and so diminishes future consumption and investment. In a recession, under all circumstances and above all, spending must be increased; and if the people do not spend enough of their money, then government must do it for them with its money. Wisely, governments are equipped to do so, because their central banks can produce all necessary liquidity. If billions of dollars or Euros will not do it, trillions will; and if trillions still fail to do the trick then quadrillions surely will. Only massive

government spending can avert an otherwise unavoidable economic meltdown. Unemployment in particular is the result of under-consumption: of people not having enough money to buy consumer goods; and it must be cured by giving them higher money wages or higher unemployment benefits.

Once the current economic crisis has been solved, governments can and must again turn to the truly pressing among the remaining problems confronting mankind: the elimination of all unfair discrimination as the ultimate desideratum of democratic egalitarianism, and the control of the global environment and in particular the world climate.

Essentially, all humans are equal. Differences are only apparent, skin-deep and insignificant: some people are white, some brown, and some black; some are tall, and others are short; some are male and some female; some speak English and others Polish or Chinese; some have cancer or AIDS and others don't. These are accidental human characteristics. Some people happen to have them and others not. However, from such accidental differences only trivial consequences follow, such that the tall can reach higher up, that only women can bear children or that some people will die sooner than others. But accidental differences such as these have no systematic bearing on mental traits, such as motivational energy, time-preference or intellectual prowess, and as such they are without explanatory power concerning economic and social success: in particular income and professional status and position. Mental traits have no physical, biological or ethnic basis and are infinitely malleable. Everyone, except for a few pathological cases, is like everyone else in this regard, and every people, throughout history, have made an equal contribution to civilization. Seemingly apparent differences are solely the result of different external circumstances and training opportunities. If properly situated and trained, everyone is capable of the same achievements. All income and achievement differences between Whites, Asians and Blacks, women and men, Latinos, Anglos and Thais, and Hindus, Protestants and Moslems would vanish. Whites could be brought up to compete on a par with Blacks for the highest prizes in the NBA, in the 100 meter sprint and in long-distance running, and Blacks could compete with Whites and Asians in math, chess and engineering. If it is found instead that the representation and distribution of various accidental groups in various social positions of income, wealth or professional status is unequal, then this shows unjustified discrimination; and such discrimination must be rectified by appropriate affirmative action programs, by which the discriminators must compensate the unjustly discriminated.

There is just one possible exception from this general principle of human equality and the evil of discrimination. For, beyond any reasonable doubt, there was one crime in history, committed by one particular people against one particular other people, that is incomparable to any other crime. It cannot be ruled out that this uniquely criminal disposition on the part of one people has genetic roots; and insofar

as this possibility cannot be ruled out, it is only fair that the collectively guilty must continue to compensate the collective victims.

Hand in hand with the efforts to eradicate the evil of discrimination, democratic governments must tackle the fundamental task of overcoming the excessive human particularism—the individualism, the localism, provincialism, regionalism and nationalism—ingrained still in the minds of most people and promote instead the ideal of universalism and of the Universal Man and the interests of humanity as such. The necessity of this policy is demonstrated most dramatically by the dangers of global climate change. As the result of countless selfish acts: the unregulated production and consumption of various non-renewable sources of energy, the whole globe is threatened by unimaginable catastrophes: of tidal waves, sharply and suddenly rising sea levels and the emergence of momentous ecological imbalances and instabilities. Only through world-wide concerted government action, and ultimately the establishment of some supra-national world-government, and through minute, scientifically validated and world-wide administered and enforced behavioral regulations of all production and consumption activities can these life-threatening dangers be averted. Gemeinwohl (public welfare) geht vor (comes before) Eigenwohl (private welfare)—this, above all, is what the problem of climate change demonstrates, and it is up to government to finally put this principle into action.

The PFS—and most certainly I, personally—consider all of this just crazy: as utter nonsense and dangerous nonsense at that. Yet this is essentially what we can hear and read day in and day out in the mainstream media and what is proclaimed by every respectable expert and eminence. Only few people can see through the entire charade and even less have the courage to speak up against it. It is the purpose of the PFS and its meetings to assemble such people, to frontally attack the entire craziness and the ruling class perpetrating it on us—and to have fun doing it, at least while we are still permitted to have fun.