

Coordination Problem

We Don't Need No Stinking Overlords

[Peter Boettke]

Dan Klein over at *Cato Unbound* gives some good NJ wisdom. However this isn't just a 'Jersey thing' that you cannot understand, everyone from Bayonne to Pismo Beach has to come back to this understanding of private property rights and a society of free and responsible individuals.

Posted by Peter Boettke on December 10, 2010 at 02:36 PM | [Permalink](#)


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It's always a little shocking to see what Klein thinks other people think...

My roots are in Smith and Hume, not the guys he mentions. I know Klein likes to cordon off Smith and Hume as best he can, and he's welcome to give it a shot but it doesn't change the extent to which they've influenced me and many, many others.

Posted by: [Daniel Kuehn](#) | [December 10, 2010 at 03:32 PM](#)

If I may add, I think that the origin of much of the current conception of the over-arching power of the state is derived from some of the ideas surrounding the French Revolution.

Before the revolution, the King was absolute. He owned all the land and the people on it. Whatever "privileges" were possessed by the individual over himself and physical property was at the "pleasure" of the monarch.

But with the French Revolution, "sovereignty" passed from the absolute King to the absolute "people," in whose name all authority flowed, and on the basis of which all "rights" and "duties" belonging to an individual were given (and could be taken away).

As historian Hans Kohn pointed out in his, "Prelude to Nation-States: The French and German Experience, 1789-1815" (Van Nostrand, 1967) p. 47:

"When on September 29 [1792] Pierre Louis Prieur, the Commissar of the Convention, proclaimed the Republic to the army of the Ardennes, one of the officers, hearing of the end of the monarchy, asked: 'For whom shall we fight from now on?' Prieur answered: 'You will fight for your homes, for your wives and children, for the nation, for the Republic. If you have neither the wish nor the courage to defend this noble cause, withdraw.'"

Two years later, the Jacobin leader, Barere, declared,

"The Republic must penetrate the souls of citizens through all their senses."

Earlier Barere had made clear what each Frenchman owed his country:

"Some owe [France] her industry, others their fortune, some their advice, others their arms; all owe her their blood. . . . The young men will fight; the married men will forge arms, transport baggage and artillery, and provide subsistence; the women will work at the soldiers' clothing, make tents, and become nurses in the hospitals for the wounded; the children will make lint out of linen; the old men, again performing the mission they had among the ancients, will be carried to the public squares, there to inflame the courage of the young warriors and propagate the hatred of kings and the unity of the republic. The houses