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## Liberalitarianism, RIP

Posted on August 24th, 2010 by Daniel McCarthy



The Cato Institute is [soon to part ways with Brink Lindsey and Will Wilkinson](#), exponents of the [libertarian-liberal fusion](#) (and all-around bad idea) known as [“liberalitarianism.”](#) Even a good Burkean might find something of value in an compound of the best elements of the Left and libertarianism, but what Lindsey and Wilkinson seemed to be headed toward was a hybrid of a worst. Lindsey had even been a [“liberventionist”](#) in the days when the Iraq War was aborning. I suppose he’s still one today.

I find myself largely agreeing with [Joseph Lawler at First Things](#):

Lindsey’s brand of liberalitarianism, especially, proscribed conservative priorities and values to such an extent that it almost seemed, to me at least, to exclude almost all movement libertarians. Take, for instance, Lindsey’s 2007 [denunciation](#) of libertarian hero Ron Paul. Lindsey claimed that Paul’s conservative personal viewpoints (“his xenophobia, his sovereignty-obsessed nationalism, his fondness for conspiracy theories, his religious fundamentalism”) indicated that Paul had a “crudely authoritarian worldview.”

Paul, to say the very least, is far from an authoritarian, as anyone with a passing knowledge of anarchist-tinged brand of politics will tell you. In criticizing him for having what are in Lindsey’s estimation backward values, Lindsey has somehow forgotten the fundamental tenet of libertarian ideology: that diverse worldviews are easily compatible when the government stays out of personal affairs.

Actually, there’s [plenty of debate](#) among libertarians on that last point, and the question is less about whether a libertarian order can tolerate “diverse worldviews” than whether a particular kind of worldview is necessary to have a libertarian order in the first place. But Lawler is right that many libertarians, no less than conservatives, find Lindsey’s pronouncements objectionable.

Was that enough to get him fired from Cato? There’s no tenure at any think tank that I know of, which means that just about anyone can be dismissed for any reason at any time. I’ll miss Wilkinson as the editor of [Cato Unbound](#), which set a standard for online-only journals.

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