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THICK AND THIN LIBERTARIANISM AND THE NON-AGGRESSION PRINCIPLE

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ABSTRACT:
This paper defends thin libertarianism against two thick variants thereof, the left and the right version. The former is based on the non-aggression principle and private property rights and their limited implications. The latter, I content, bring in a whole host of irrelevant considerations.

KEYWORDS:
Libertarianism; property rights; trespass

I. INTRODUCTION

The phrase "I'll stick with you through thick and thin" evinces great loyalty. The present paper is an attempt to "stick with" libertarianism through the thickets of thinism and thickism.

In this paper I will defend pure, perfect or excruciatingly thin libertarianism. I shall reject the thick versions thereof.

Of what do the two visions consist? Thinism posits the non-aggression principle (NAP) as the foundation of this philosophy, along with private property rights based upon homesteading and subsequent licit commercial interaction, "capitalist acts between consenting adults" in the pithy phrase of Nozick (1974, p. 163). The two go together. They are opposite sides of the same coin. We need a theory of rights in property in order to make the NAP operational. For example, if I now grab the shirt you are wearing, have I committed aggression against you? Only if it is really your clothing. If you stole it from me yesterday, I am merely repossessing my own property;

you are the criminal, not I. Precisely who owns that shirt is crucially important to determining rights in all such cases.[1]

Here is a ringing endorsement of thin libertarianism from Rothbard (2000, p. 101):

> Libertarianism is logically consistent with almost any attitude toward culture, society, religion, or moral principle. In strict logic, libertarian political doctrine can be severed from all other considerations; logically one can be – and indeed most libertarians in fact are: hedonists, libertines, immoralists, militant enemies of religion in general and Christianity in particular – and still be consistent adherents of libertarian politics. In fact, in strict logic, one can be a consistent devotee of property rights politically and be a moocher, a scamster, and a petty crook and racketeer in practice, as all too many libertarians turn out to be.

In sharp contrast is thick libertarianism. Advocates of this position, to be sure, include the NAP and private property rights, but they add on adventitious, extraneous and irrelevant considerations. For example, left wing thickists[2] aver that in addition to these two foundational aspects of this philosophy, an advocate must also favor interracial marriage, homosexuality, egalitarianism, LBGTism, and oppose racism, sexism, ageism and other such instances of discrimination. Right wing thickists[3] take pretty much the opposite perspective on several, many or even in the extreme all of these considerations.

The thin libertarian takes no position on any of these matters. For the thinnist, it should be illegal to initiate violence against the practitioners of any of these activities. Similarly, a thin in good standing might have views on chess versus checkers, vanilla versus chocolate ice cream,[4] but they are totally apart from this political economic philosophy. Not so, necessarily, the thicksters. There are no limits to what they can add to the edifice, and characterize the resulting hodge-podge as libertarianism.

Let us now consider, and reject, some critiques of the thin libertarian position. In section II we will consider objections to thinism based upon the logical implications of libertarianism. The burden of section III is to combat left wing thick libertarianism. In

[1] For supporters of thin libertarianism, see Albright, 2014; Block, 2015; Cantwell, 2014; Gordon, 2011; Hornberger, 2014; McCaskey, 2014; Mosquito, 2014A, 2014B; Reece, 2015; Rockwell, 2014; Sanchez, 2014; Smith, 2014; Vance, 2014; Wenzel, 2014A, 2014B; Woods, 2013.

[2] For advocates of left-wing thick libertarianism, see Gillespie and Welch, 2011; Hoppe (2001, p. 218); Johnson, 2008A, 2008B, 2013; Long, 2007, 2008A, 2008B; Reisenwitz, 2013; Richman, 2014A, 2014B, 2014C, 2014D; Tucker, 2014; Vallier, 2013, 2014; Zwolinski, 2011

[3] States Rockwell (2021): "... we should condemn the movement to normalize the abnormal." Also see Hoppe (2001, p. 218)

[4] No thick libertarian to my knowledge has ever incorporated a choice on these matters into the philosophy. But, in principle, there is nothing stopping one from so doing either.

section IV the focus is on a refutation of right-wing thick libertarianism. I conclude in section V with a call to all libertarians to become thinner.

II. LOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF LIBERTARIANISM

First consider the continuum challenge (Block and Barnett, 2008). A threatens to shoot innocent B, or waves his fist at the latter in a threatening manner. How dire must be the threat from A to B be, in order for B to be justified in taking violent against action against A? Suppose the two are separated by 1000 miles, 20 miles, 500 yards, 50 feet, 3 feet, 2 inches. Obviously, the closer they are, the more justified is B in using violence against A, from a defensive posture. But where should the libertarian draw the line? The point is, there is no hard and fast libertarian position on this matter, no clear "red line" such that distance on one side of it should be treated markedly different than on the other. We cannot determine justice in cases such as these purely on the basis of libertarian principles. Needed is some sort of common sense, to be provided, hopefully, by a (private) court[5] and a jury of one's peers.

A similar analysis applies to the statutory rape age. It is crystal clear that if a man goes to bed with a five-year-old girl he is guilty of this crime, even if she "agrees." We simply to not acquiesce in the notion that a child of that age can give consent to any such act. On the other hand, if a woman aged twenty-five engages in this activity, there is no question but that she is capable of making such a decision. But, again, where do you draw the line? No matter where it is reasonably drawn, problems arise. For example, if the age of 17 is chosen, it cannot be denied that some 16 year-olds are more mature than some 18 year-olds. The solution: again we rely upon a court or a system based upon agreed upon rule givers to make such a determination.

But does this not constitute thick libertarianism? After all, we are going past the two very narrow foundation of libertarianism, the NAP and private property rights. I maintain that this is not the case. Solving continuum problems of these sorts is not to add irrelevancies to the libertarian philosophy. Rather, it is to "tease out" logical implications "residing" within these two basic premises. Courts, legislatures, arbitration, are also needed to attain a functioning legal system. This requirement, and the solution thereof, does not constitute any attempt to hijack this philosophy.

[5] See on this Benson, 1990, 2002; Berman and Dasser, 1990; Feeley, 2019; Friedman, 1979, 1989; Hoppe, 2001; Marcus, 2009; Osterfeld, 1989; Popeo, 1988; Peden, 1977; Rothbard, 1973A, 1973B 1982, 1991; Stringham, 1998-1999; Tannehill and Tannehill, 1984, 2001; Thierer, 1992; Woolridge, 1970; Young, 2002

A similar analysis applies to implicit contract challenges. You go to a restaurant. You order a cup of coffee. You slurp it down. They present you with a bill for $1 million. Are you required to pay this under libertarian law? Certainly not, even if this price is there, in big black letters, right on the menu, which you neglected to read. Why not? This is because all commercial transactions to be valid must have a "meeting of the minds." No fraud or such sharp practice is allowed. But where did we get this from in saying that? Are we thick libertarians making up things as we go along? Again, no. Rather, we are "tapping into" one of the "penumbras" of the libertarian legal code.

On the other hand, there are some who will contend there is a vast social contract according to which we have all given our consent to the government. After all, we use the states' roads and highways, bridges and tunnels, libraries and parks, schools and courts. Thus we have implicitly "agreed" to pay taxes for their financing. In rejecting this untoward and unjustified claim are we again sinking into the morass of thick libertarianism? Of course not. Yes, there is danger in employing implicit contracts. The critic will accept that pertaining to the coffee and insist that it can be stretched without limit. But this argument can boomerang against the detractor. We all support the idea of rights, and oppose murder, theft, arson, kidnapping, etc. Thus, there is an implicit agreement to reject the state since it engages in all these crimes! Two can play at that game.

One more case. When a boat is lost at sea and someone else salvages it, traditional law merchant awards 2/3 of its value to the original owner and 1/3 to the rescuer.[6] Where oh where can any such division be unearthed in the foundational principles of libertarianism? Nowhere, that is where. Does this then constitute the incursion of unjustified thickism? Again we deny this claim. Rather, we interpret it as an implication of libertarianism. After all, some sort of arrangement has to be made. When private courts came up with these figures, instead of a 60% – 40% split, or any other such arrangement, most libertarians would accept this as not unreasonable.

In all of these cases, we are attempting to fill out what NAP means in actual practice versus arbitrarily adding to it to fulfill some other extraneous agenda.[7]

[6] We abstract from the question of whether or not this is justified.

[7] I owe to A.J. Cesario the thought that these attempts to fill in, or exemplify, the workings and implications of the NAP could be construed as instances of thick libertarianism.

III. A REPUDIATION OF LEFT-WING THICK LIBERTARIANISM

Sheldon Richman has been one of the most outspoken advocates of left-wing thick libertarianism. What is his case in behalf of this position? Richman (2010) starts out on a solid (thin) libertarian note:

> "For obvious reasons libertarians are committed to freedom of association, which of course includes the freedom not to associate, and the right of property owners to set the rules on their property. Yet libertarians don't want to be mistaken for racists, who have been known to (inconsistently) invoke property rights in defense of racial discrimination."

But all too soon he runs into trouble:

> "(I say 'inconsistently' because historically they did not object to laws requiring segregation.)"

The problem here is that failure to say something cannot logically be construed to aver anything.[8] Thus, this does not prove his point that libertarians are logically "inconsistent" when they do not object to being considered racists.

This author continues his analysis:

> "Let's start with a question of some controversy. Should a libertarian even care about racism? (By racism here I mean nonviolent racist acts only.) I am not asking if people who are libertarians should care about racism, but rather: Are there specifically libertarian grounds to care about it?
>
> "Some say no, arguing that since liberty is threatened only by the initiation of physical force (and fraud), nonviolent racist conduct – repugnant as it is — is not a libertarian concern...
>
> "But I and others disagree with that claim. I think there are good libertarian grounds to abhor racism – and not only that, but also to publicly object to it and even to take peaceful but vigorous nonstate actions to stop it.
>
> "What could be a libertarian reason to oppose nonviolent racism?... Libertarianism is a commitment to the nonaggression principle. That principle rests on some justification. Thus it is conceivable that a principle of nonviolent action, such as racism, though not involving the initiation of force and contradicting libertarianism per se, could nevertheless contradict the justification for one's libertarianism.
>
> "For example, a libertarian who holds his or her philosophy out of a conviction that all men and women are (or should be) equal in authority and thus none may subordinate another against his or her will (the most common justification) — that libertarian would naturally object to even nonviolent forms of subordination. Racism is just such a form (though not the only one), since existentially it entails at least an obligatory humiliating

[8] Unless the speaker or writer has previously committed himself to so doing, and has failed to carry through, which surely does not apply in this case.

> deference by members of one racial group to members of the dominant racial group. (The obligatory deference need not always be enforced by physical coercion.)"

There are problems here. First of all, it is difficult, in the extreme, to see how this can be a justification for libertarianism: "a conviction that all men and women are (or should be) equal in authority." Rather, this is an aspect of egalitarianism, something not usually associated with the freedom philosophy.[9]

Secondly, suppose, arguendo, that this is indeed one of the concepts[10] that could be used to justify libertarianism. Still, it by no means logically follows that racism be ruled incompatible with libertarianism. For this practice, as Richman himself describes it, as it is totally divorced from any initiatory violence, need not involve any "authority" at all. The Richmanian racist might merely wish to have nothing to do with certain groups of people. According to this author: "Seeing fellow human beings locked into a servile role – even if that role is not explicitly maintained by force – properly, reflexively summons in libertarians an urge to object." However, this sort of racism need not have anything to do with servility. Merely separateness.

Third, why is authoritarianism incompatible with libertarianism? The orchestra conductor is a very authoritarian figure. Please out of tune, or not in time, and he will stop the entire practice and glare at you. He even insists that the wind players breathe when he tells them to, not at their leisure. It is difficult to imagine anything more authoritarian than that.

Richman continues his critique of thin libertarianism:

> "Another, related, libertarian reason to oppose nonviolent racism is that it all too easily metamorphoses from subtle intimidation into outright violence."

But this argument, too, fails. First of all, the desire to separate from another race does not at all imply "subtle intimidation." Male homosexuals wish to separate themselves from females, for romantic purposes. Lesbians have the same attitude toward men. Male heterosexuals[11] have this attitude toward women, as do female heterosexuals toward others on the distaff side. Is there any "subtle intimidation" involved in any of this? Of course not.

[9] Rothbard (1971) says it best merely with the title he chose for this splendid essay attacking egalitarianism: "Freedom, Inequality, Primitivism and the Division of Labor"

[10] Other justifications of this philosophy include "A is A" from Ayn Rand, Natural Law (Benson, 1993; Block, 2004; Chafuen, 2003; van Dun, 2001; Hulsmann, 1998; Madison, 1986; Meng, 2002; Rothbard, 1980), religion (God abhors rights violations). A very powerful answer to this question has been provided by argumentation ethics (Hoppe, 1988A, 1988B, 1988C, 1988D, 1993, 1995) and estoppel (Kinsella, 1996, 2016).

[11] Toxic cis-gendered people

Secondly, numerous reductios ad absurdum come to mind. If non-violent racism can metamorphosize into outright violence, what other non-violent, and therefore justified acts or institutions can also do so? Well, European soccer matches are well known for erupting into "outright violence." Should the libertarian wish to ban such sporting events? Of course not. Ditto for violent movies, marches to celebrate Super Bowl victories, etc. In some countries, women who wear mini-skirts are subject to "outright violence." Should such clothing be prohibited by law on libertarian grounds? Perish the thought. Just because something licit can "metamorphosize" into something illicit does not mean the former is incompatible with libertarianism, Richman to the contrary notwithstanding.

Richman is by no means finished with his attempted trashing of thin libertarianism. He asserts:

> "... libertarians lose credibility when they pretend to deny the obvious social distinction between a privately owned public place – such as a restaurant – and a privately owned private place – such as a home. We see this too often. A libertarian will challenge a 'progressive' thus: 'If you really believe there should be laws against whites-only restaurants, to be consistent you should also demand laws against whites-only house parties.'
>
> "That's a lousy argument.
>
> "When I walk past a restaurant, in the back of my mind is the thought, 'I can go in there.' I have no such thought when I walk past a home. It's a matter of expectations reasonably derived from the function of the place. Homes and restaurants are alike in some important respects – they're privately owned – but they're also different in some important respects. Why deny that?"

Not so fast. If some restaurants had large signs in front of them, stating "No Richmans are welcome here" something they have every right to do, my debating partner could no longer think "I can go in there." Alternatively, if numerous private homes announced in large letters "Richmans are welcome here"[12] his expectations would radically change. In any case, what is the relevance of this author's expectations of where the welcome mat is placed to libertarian law? There is no connection whatsoever. Those libertarians who "lose credibility" by insisting that there should be no difference in proper law between private homes and restaurants lose unjustifiably, and only on the part of politically correct snowflake wokesters, not libertarians.

Richman takes one more kick at the can:

[12] As far as I'm concerned, every home of mine has one of them, at least implicitly, since I like and admire Sheldon Richman, and consider him a friend. He and I certainly disagree on this one issue, but I would be hard put to mention any other divergence of ours in all of political economy.

> "Finally, no doubt someone will have raised an eyebrow at my inclusion of sit-ins in the list of appropriate nonviolent forms of protest against racist conduct. Isn't a sit-in at a private lunch counter a trespass?
>
> "It is — and the students who staged the sit-ins did not resist when they were removed by police. (Sometimes they were beaten by thugs who themselves were not subjected to police action.) The students never forced their way into any establishment. They simply entered, sat well-behaved at the counter, and waited to be served. When told they would not be served, they said through their actions, 'You can remove me, but I will not help you.'"

If this is not trespass, a clear and present violation not only of libertarian law but of that of any civilized society, then nothing is. How would Richman like it if dozens of people "sat in" in his house or on his front lawn? They would not physically resist removal, but they would not voluntarily leave either. Would this author not feel even the slightest aggrieved, put upon, victimized? Would he not construe these acts as violations of his rights to private property? Of course he would. This is a rookie mistake on his part. Trespass is one of the key violations of the right to private property, and the latter is one of the very foundational building blocks of the entire libertarian edifice.

Richman, a thick libertarian, is willing to jettison our beloved philosophy in order to flog a fervent desire of his: that minority groups not be dis-accommodated by peaceful boycotts. He really ought to read up on a bit of economic analysis demonstrating the very opposite. To wit, that racial, sexual, or, indeed, any other kind of non-violent discrimination is impotent to really harm the target group.[13] For, whenever it occurs, if renders the latter more powerful. For example, if the majority shifts to the left its demand curve for hiring the folliclely challenged, the wages of the latter will fall. But this means greater profits can be attained by employing them. And, as they are hired, their compensation rises once again.[14] Similarly, if right handed people are reluctant to lease apartments to the left handed, the latter will have to pay more. And, if so, more profits can then be captured by renting to them, which will drive down the rents they must pay.

The plight of black people in the south during the Jim Crow era had nothing whatsoever to do with the refusal of Woolworth's to serve them. Rather, their

[13] See on this Becker, 1957; Block, 1992, 1998, 2010, 2013; Block and Williams, 1981; Epstein, 1992; Herrnstein and Murray, 1994; Levin, 1982, 1984, 1987a, 1997b; Mattei, 2004; Rockwell, 2003, 2014A; Rothbard, 1978; Sowell, 1975, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1994, 2015; Whitehead, Block and Hardin, 1999; Whitehead and Block, 2003; Williams, 1982a, 1982b, 2003.

[14] In one of the ancient Greek myths, whenever the stronger god knocked the weaker one to the ground, the latter bounced back up stronger, since one of his parents was Mother Earth, and she was helping him. Well, if I had this advantage, I could have beaten Mike Tyson in a boxing match, and, believe me, I can't punch my way out of a wet paper bag. The point is, the targets of discrimination have something akin or analogous to this power, and Richman is oblivious to this fact.

difficulties emanating from the violence employed against them. In the totally free society, with tastes for discrimination. A similar analysis applied to bus companies requiring black people to "ride in the back." Under the free society that Richman and I both favor, another such transportation service would have arisen to address the needs of this discriminated against group. Why did this not occur? A bus company needed a permit to being operating, and the government would not allow any such thing to take place. What is negatively impacting the black community is not racism: it is the welfare system that breaks up their families, drug prohibitions which lead to black on black crime, the minimum wage law, which exacerbates their unemployment, other government programs, and, historically, violence against them.

Richman has a good heart. He is filled with the milk of human kindness. But his economic understanding is flawed. As a result, he is all too willing to give up on (thin) libertarianism, the last best hope for the weak, for the least the last and the lost amongst us. In so doing, he undermines his own goals.

IV. A REFUTATION OF RIGHT-WING THICK LIBERTARIANISM

Hans-Hermann Hoppe is not only one of the most brilliant libertarian theorists now active, but numbers in that way amongst all who have ever lived. He has made numerous and magnificent contributions to our philosophy. However, on this one issue, we must, sadly, diverge.

He states (2001, p. 218):

> "In a covenant concluded among proprietor and community tenants for the purpose of protecting their private property, no such thing as a right to free (unlimited) speech exists, not even to unlimited speech on one's own tenant-property. One may say innumberable things and promote almost any idea under the sun but naturally no one is permitted to advocate ideas contrary to the very purpose of the covenant of preserving and protecting private property, such as democracy and communism. *There can be no tolerance towards democrats and communists in a libertarian social order. They will have to be physically separated and expelled from society*. Likewise, in a covenant founded for the purpose of protecting family and kin, there can be no tolerance toward those habitually promoting lifestyles incompatible with this goal. *They – the advocates of alternative, non-family and kin-centered lifestyles such as, for instance, individual hedonism, parasitism, nature-environment worship, homosexuality, or communism – will have to be physically removed from society too, if one is to maintain a libertarian order*." Emphasis added by present author

I have no problem with gated communities fashioning their own rules. Condominium associations have the right, too, to include and exclude members and guests on the basis of whatever criteria they hold dear. It would have been a better

analysis if Hoppe had in addition averred that hedonists, parasites, homosexuals, communists, nature worshippers, whim worshipers,[15] democrats, opponents of family values, meshuganas[16] also have a right to set up groups of their own, and not allow people access to their property unless they adhere to these practices and beliefs. Ordinarily, it would be improper to criticize an author for what he did not write; only actual words spoken or written are fair game. However, let me say this now, loud and clear: these people have the self-same rights to do so, according to libertarian theory.[17]

Mosquito (2019) attempts to rescue Hoppe from the predicament into which he has written himself. He states:

> "Walter, read the sections that I have highlighted.[18] This is exactly the context that Hoppe offers. Such a covenant does not have to be limited to a 'condominium.' It is perfectly applicable to a homeowners' association, amusement park, hotel, larger community, etc.
>
> "A word like 'society' requires definition and context. Hoppe has offered it directly in the quoted passage. Walter is hung up on the word 'society,' because he has in mind what this means – anything other than a condominium. Yet Hoppe gives the precise context in which he is using the term. Walter chooses to ignore this.
>
> "Enough is enough."

Context schmontext say I. Context can only take a writer so far. To maintain that non-criminals may be removed or excluded from "society" is a blatant contradiction of libertarianism. To say so twice in one paragraph is to add to the error. Mosquito's first mistake is in thinking that I see a covenant as limited to a condominium. As a native speaker of the English language, I full well recognize it can also include "a homeowners' association, amusement park, hotel." And, also, to demonstrate that I acknowledge this point, to clubs, schools, friendship circles, indeed, to any voluntary group.

But certainly *not* to anything like the "larger community." Here, Mosquito make the same error as Hoppe, even in the face of much criticism of the latter. "Larger community" is not a voluntary organization. No one agreed to be part of "society" or the "larger community." There is no such thing as a social contract which involves either "society" or the "larger community." When Hoppe, and now Mosquito, wants

[15] I couldn't resist this one, in honor of Ayn Rand

[16] Ok, so I'm getting giddy; sue me

[17] I really wonder at the inclusion of homosexuals in this list. Some of the greatest contributors to libertarianism in history have engaged in that practice. For but a few instances, see https://www.lp.org/gay-libertarian-couple-outpolls-gop-in-dc/

[18] He is referring here to Block, 2019. These sections read as follows: "In a covenant concluded among proprietor and community tenants for the purpose of protecting their private property," and "Likewise, in a covenant founded for the purpose of protecting family and kin"

to start removing people from condominiums, homeowners' associations, golf clubs, gated communities, well and good, at least from the libertarian point of view; well, at least such decisions should be perfectly legal.[19] But when you start excluding non-criminals from "society" or the "larger community" you have "gone native": you have violated libertarian principle. In other words, in Mosquito's attempt to defend Hoppe, he makes the identical error.

As a great admirer of his, and good friend of his, I have written to Hoppe on more than one occasion urging him to publicly mention that this removal from "society" was a mere typographical error. He has declined to do so. I can only infer that he stands by his words as written. I think this a serious mistake on his part.

The real difficulty arises when Hoppe mentions removing people not from private cooperative associations, but from "society." He says this not once but twice in the above quotation. This is a horse of an entirely different color. "Society," presumably, includes *all* of us. No one, no group, at least not compatibly with the libertarian philosophy, may remove, or exclude, anyone else.[20] To say so is to commit a blunder of the most serious nature.

Hoppe's usual strong sense of symmetry, equality, indeed, of elemental fairness, has deserted him at this point. Consider this statement of Rothbard's (1978, p. 35):

> "... if a producer is not entitled to the fruits of his labor, who is? It is difficult to see why a newborn Pakistani baby should have a moral claim to a quotal share of ownership of a piece of Iowa land that someone has just transformed into a wheatfield - *and vice versa of course for an Iowan baby and a Pakistani farm.*" (emphasis added by present author).

Now peruse this paragraph again, deleting from it the material in italics. It would then read as if Rothbard were, for all that is holy, attacking this southeastern nation and its people. The meaning of this paragraph without this "vice versa of course" proviso would be radically changed from something Rothbard meant to say, to something entirely different. Namely, his message, literally, had nothing to do with Iowa and Pakistan. Rather, he was making an entirely different point, that is, that "a producer is ... (indeed) entitled to the fruits of his labor" wherever this may take place.

Had Hoppe followed the Rothbard model in this case he would have written something along these lines: Normal, straight, heterosexuals have the right to exclude from their property hippies, homosexuals and weirdos. *And vice versa of course:* commies, democrats, statists, may treat those rednecks in flyover country who, in the

[19] It would be nice if even once in a while that acknowledged that those with alternative life styles have exactly the same right to remove the straights from their territories.

[20] Apart from criminals of course.

memorable words of Barack Obama, "cling to their guns and religion"[21] in exactly the same manner.

Why, then, did he not do this? One possibility is sheer oversight. The other is that he believes that some people have more rights than others. Obviously, the former interpretation is correct. In the hundreds of thousands of words Hoppe has so far published, perhaps many millions, he has never to my knowledge, except at this one point, indicated that the right not to be subject to initiatory aggression should be enjoyed by some people more than others, or the latter not at all. So, Hoppe is guilty of a venal intellectual sin, here, not a mortal one.

Can the same be said of Mosquito? He approaches this issue with a clean slate. He could have lightly chastised Hoppe for his error of omission. Only instead, he attempts to defend him. In effect, he, like Hoppe in his refusal to clarify matters, leaves readers with the impression that some people have more rights than others, certainly a violation of libertarian principles.[22]

V. CONCLUSION

Libertarianism is under attack as perhaps never before. Previously, implicit criticisms abounded. But until recently there were no explicit rejections of liberty, at least not emanating from leaders of relatively civilized nations.

But consider this: "In an interview with MSNBC on Wednesday, Former CIA Director John Brennan made the statement that Biden intel community 'are moving in laser-like fashion to try to uncover as much as they can about' the pro-Trump 'insurgency' that harbors 'religious extremists, authoritarians, fascists, bigots, racists, nativists, even libertarians.' John Brennan indicates that libertarians are a threat that the (sic) poses a risk to national security. (Brennan, 2021)[23]

We libertarians are now linked to "religious extremists, authoritarians, fascists, bigots, racists, nativists..." This is a sad day for libertarians and libertarianism. All the more reason then, that members of this community, at least, be more clear on what we really stand for: thin libertarianism. We must reject both versions of thick libertarianism, of the left as well as of the right.

[21] https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2008/april/obama-they-cling-to-guns-or-religion.html

[22] Mosquito, too, is an excellent libertarian. He has made many and important contributions to our libertarian movement, although not in this present case. A man of mature years, but only a recent contributor to the freedom philosophy, he has had much success in a different field. It is very rare for a person to be successful in two very different "industries." Mosquito's career path reminds me of that of Anthony De Jasay. It would be difficult for me to come up with a better compliment than that.

[23] For a denial of this claim, see Czopik, 2021; Ngo, 2021

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