

*Anti-Capitalism as Anti-Americanism*

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There are only three explanations of the origin of prosperity. First, prosperity is viewed as the product of magic, alchemy, or wizardry, poof! Second, prosperity is the product of tribal or national conquest. Guess what? You have it and I am taking it! Third, prosperity is rooted in the human creative capacity. The first two views assume that wealth is pre-existing: the third view posits that prosperity can be created by human effort.

America for the most part and until recently, reflects the third way of thinking. This kind of effort and knowledge is not wholly captured by neoclassical economics and its assumption of a completely rational, utility maximizing, fully informed homo economicus. In the past attention has focused on financial capital and physical capital as static, limited assets to be accumulated and managed. The source of economic prosperity was taken for granted, largely as an existing condition to be exploited. In this context, economics was modeled more on the basis of resource management, with growth and development coming largely from the management of costs. But economic growth is not reducible to any mechanical model that can be planned at the macro level. It requires freedom, it requires inspired effort, and it requires commitment to a larger, even spiritual purpose.

Within America's Judeo-Christian inheritance, creative obedience or norms in economic activities are one primary way for adherents to acknowledge and demonstrate faith. America by its very definition embodied what has been termed, the 'Protestant work ethic'.

America's unique 'spiritual capital', to use my word, is reflected economically in three ways. First, there has been phenomenal economic growth associated with what could be called 'the technological project' that cannot be explained in traditional ways. America is the essence of that project in its 300 year long, noble experiment. Second, Americans are more productive, and work harder than their counterparts in other developed economies. (Any number of statistics proves this fact). Third, Americans are the most philanthropic people in the history of the world (this too has been measured *ad nauseam*).

This American heritage is under assault from a variety of sources today. As a result, we see a progression from governmental bureaucratic centralization to secularism to reductive materialism and ultimately to a social-collectivist conception of human welfare. Who are these attackers of free markets, of both America and its economic achievement rooted in capitalism, as we have known them?

I would name four:

1. Perennial (heretical) utopian Christian Gnostics particularly in various forms of socialism (rampant most particularly in academe).
2. Rousseau-Marx derived narratives of equality and complaints about Modernity and especially capitalism and its so-called, many inherent evils.
3. Militant Secularism (both domestically and internationally) and,
4. Militant Islamism in its varied violent jihadist forms and permutations.

In my view, it is time we rebut these attacks. Clearly, America as we know it will not survive without a renewal of its spiritual capital, a defense of free markets, greater civic participation, the rule of law, and complete freedom of religion or conscience.

Specifically, this means the importance of personal autonomy and responsibility stemming from the dignity of the individual as a person, and the need to support civil association with a robust content-full morality. This is most definitely, not a theocracy but it is nothing less than a democratic republic that is rooted in commerce and ultimately, produces human flourishing.

If we are to combat anti-capitalism and anti-Americanism we must see the rejuvenation of our Judeo-Christian spiritual capital as a cultural phenomenon, the non-apologetic expression of our faith, the reeducation of misguided clerics, educators, the media, and America's leaders, and most of all direct, honest, lawful, and vigorous confrontation of America's critics and her enemies.

The world of 2012 is chock full of anti-American zealots who also detest capital formation, wealth generation, and the fruits and rewards of competitive free markets. Arguably, even within our society (in those holding political office) America has more detractors, more haters of the Founders vision and the toil of our ancestors, than at any time in its long history.

It is therefore incumbent on those of us still able to make a defense of America and free markets to do so as the chime that changed the entire world did when it rang on July 8, 1776. That Bell, in this very city, had the quotation inscribed; 'Proclaim Liberty throughout the land unto all the inhabitants thereof,' taken from Leviticus 25:10 in the Hebrew Old Testament. We need to ring that Bell again and defend and rearticulate America's spiritual capital, so as to defeat those who wail against her and her successful meritorious economic system.