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"Libertarianism/Anarcho-Capitalism" Gains Ground



Eugen von Böhm-Bawerk

Friedrich von Hayek

Murray Rothbard

Milton Friedman

Javier Milei

Sources: Rebellion

The influence of the ideas of Javier Milei (and his aggressive style), the candidate for the presidency of Argentina 2023, seems to extend throughout Latin America. Videos and written relationships that account for these ideas abound. Politically it attacks the "shitty lefties" (<https://shorturl.at/sGIW0>) and any socialism is despicable, moreover a failure (Cuba, Venezuela, North Korea are "garbage"). Republican equality is the "tyranny" of majorities. "Freedom" is unlimited for the individual. The sale of human organs and even children represents "one more market" (<https://shorturl.at/binwN>). "Private property" is absolute, not only over one's own body, but over all kinds of goods and services. The state is the oppressor of freedom and must disappear. "Between the mafia and the state I prefer the mafia. The mafia has codes, the mafia complies, the mafia does not lie, the mafia competes," he says (<https://shorturl.at/huwT3>). Taxes are theft. Everything must be privatized. The redistribution of wealth is abominable. "Work" is free, as is the decision to be poor. And, from his arrogance, he affirms: we are "better", "superior", we win the cultural battle, "our morality" is imposed.

In economic matters, the "libertarians" or "anarcho-capitalists" – like Milei – return to the old ideas of the English *Manchesterians* of the nineteenth century, pass through the *Austrian school* (above all Friedrich von Hayek and, in addition, C. Menger and F. Wieser) and reach the *neoliberal* contemporaries (Milton Friedman). They use old critics of Marx such as Eugen von Böhm-Bawerk (1851-1914); and among his intellectual fathers is headed by Murray Rothbard and with him Ludwig von Mises and Hans-Hermann Hoppe (also: J. A. Schumpeter, E. Lederer, R. Reisch, W. G. F. Roscher, B. Hildebrand and K. Knies). A mixture of outstanding professors, praisers of capitalism, enemies of all socialism, anti-Marxist radicals and utopians of a society based on the free market, private property, without state. The axis of their economic approaches is found in the *subjective* theory of value, which they consider to give them the "moral superiority" over Marx's *objective theory of value*. But this debate already comes from the nineteenth century and if someone wants to follow it can go to an "old" edition of the renowned *Notebooks of Past and Present* of 1974, in which Böhm-Bawerk and Hilferding (<https://shorturl.at/jOQR8>) are confronted.

Libertarians do not hesitate to exalt capitalism as the victorious system in the world. In fact, to demonstrate their ideas, a large group of anarcho-capitalists, proposed to create a "Free State Project" (*Free State Project* or *Free Town Project*, 2001) in Grafton, New Hampshire (USA), with limited government, without taxes and with "free" individuals, which was a resounding failure (<https://shorturl.at/dCJSU>). It was a kind of emulation, but in reverse (that is, the paradise of free private property), of the *phalansteries* (with socialist-community property) created by Charles Fourier (1772-1837) or of the factories of New Lanark (Scotland) established by Robert Owen (1739-1806) another utopian socialist, which were successful for their productivity and the enormous good treatment of the workers.

The anarcho-capitalism, which supposedly could coincide with the authentic anarchists (I have dealt with it here: <https://shorturl.at/jqy28>) and even with Marxism in the questioning of all power and in the abolition of the State, blocks their own understanding of an inexorable fact: under the capitalist regime, before minimal, limited, "reduced" states or governments (*minarchism*), prevails the PRIVATE POWER, that is, of the companies, of the capitalists, of the owners of capital, who come to dominate over the whole of society. The "anarchism" of libertarians, which believes that capitalist property responds to a kind

of human "state of nature," does not have a single answer to this new, unique and real oppressive and exploitative power.

Libertarianism misrepresents original anarchism and Marxism. Its supporters ignore or falsify world economic history and, above all, the economic history of Latin America. Capitalism in the region was built on the legacies of *colonialism*, which marked *underdevelopment*; and was established on the *oligarchic regimes* of the republican era. Industrialization was late and in the countries not only the result of private investors, but of *developmentalism* from States that acted on the economy. Social policies and labor laws emerged in the Latin American twentieth century to curb capitalist super-exploitation and protect human beings subordinated to owners devoid of any social sense, because they privileged their profitability and wealth. Neoliberalism in the region was inaugurated on death, as happened in Chile, during the dictatorship of A. Pinochet, whose economic model was reproduced in the terrorist regimes of the Southern Cone, with the support of the upper bourgeoisie. Neoliberalism was established by the IMF to condition the payment of foreign debts, which strangled each country. It articulated perfectly with the interests of the oligarchies of the region, which have maintained their ideals of *minimum government* and *maximum exploitation* of workers, with low wages, strenuous hours, without rights or public social security. Throughout the region, the privatization of public goods and services did not favor the inhabitants, but rather entrepreneurs reduced to circles of power that do not exceed 1% of the national population. Public and private corruption has prevailed in these processes, as in Ecuador, where the sucretization (1983) and resucretization (1987) of private debts (State transformed private debts into dollars to sucres -national currency of that time- and assumed external payment in dollars); And since the mid-1990s the successive bank "bailouts", without stopping the crisis that erupted in 1999 with "corralito" of deposits, thousands of victims, families who lost their savings, suicides and, then, a massive emigration. In four decades of Ecuadorian constitutional democracy, there have been no cases that surpassed these private robberies of state funds.

The consequences of neoliberalism abound in all countries, because the modernity awakened by business development, the flourishing of good business and the primacy of capital over society as a whole hides the deterioration of living and working conditions. The constant mass of informal, underemployed and unemployed people reaches

60 and 70% of the active population. Latin America became the most inequitable region in the world. And the studies on these issues are compelling. It is also worth mentioning ECLAC's reports, which do not seem to come to the attention of neoliberals/libertarians dedicated to reading, studying and basing their criteria on theorists alien to Latin American realities.

There is not a single country in the world that applies anarcho-capitalist utopias. They are theoretical and even academic speculations. If applied, they would cause a real hecatomb of social classes in countries with powerful states such as the United States and even more so in economies that, after World War II, opted for *welfare states*, such as Canada or European countries, despite the fact that some neoliberal ideas have also penetrated them. In Europe, social security, public education or medicine and health that are equally public and financed by heavy taxes have not been lost. In Ecuador that ideology has been transformed into a pentologue of slogans, which are indispensable among business elites of power and, in addition, for a series of think-tanks, right-wing academics and, obviously, politicians of equal ranks: no to the State, no to taxes, no to regulated work, yes to privatizations, yes to the free market. It is undeniable that the Daniel Noboa/Verónica Abad binomial for the presidential elections of October 15, also expresses these slogans, if one attends to the sphere of its class interests, the government program presented and the statements that the binomial has made in different media (<https://shorturl.at/uzKP9> / <https://shorturl.at/xEMQT>).

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