

Tea party and right wing populism

JOHN SARGIS

The tea party of several million adherents is a generic term for an amalgam of loosely confederated conservative, right wing populist groups within and without the Republican Party. The tea party initially formed and grew in response to Wall Street bailouts and the grip of special interests controlling Congress. The tea party coalesced the extreme right wing of the Republican Party and built its coalitions on peoples' dissatisfaction with the government, crushing the Democrats and giving them a "shellacking," in Obama's dry words, in the recent mid-term elections by running the Democrats out of power in the House of Representatives, chipping away at the Dems slim majority in the Senate, and taking over state houses and governorships across the country. The election was a wholesale rejection of the Democratic Party and rightfully so. The Dems lied their way into controlling the White House and Congress and then thumbed their noses at the American people. The tea party is a power not to be shrugged off. They want to take over the Republican Party and move American politics further to the right. To this end they successfully removed Republicans during the primaries, who were not conservative enough. However, the tea party is not a political party, but all tea party candidates ran as Republicans. It is not surprising that the tea party resonates with many Americans given they are handily mis-educated.

Right wing libertarianism and the tea party

Adopting a kind of a populist right wing libertarianism summed up in limited government, the tea party wants to abolish all discretionary or social spending programs by foreclosing departments/programs such as the department of education, social security, medicare, healthcare, IRS, among others. Tea party Republicans are seeking to repeal the 17th, 16th and 14th amendments to the Constitution which establish election of the Senate by popular vote (prior to 1913 Senators were appointed by state legislatures), ability of the government to collect taxes, and granting citizenship to those born in the US whose parent(s) are not here legally, respectively. The tea party with their Republican allies in Congress vow to dismantle health care by de-funding it and, also, phase out social security. The tea party also believes that the sole function of government is security, and to that end supports a strong military growth. Reading various tea party platforms reveals that they are xenophobic, so it was easy for the tea party support a self-hating Cuban-American Marco Rubio, the newly elected tea party Senator and latest darling of the Republicans from Florida. The tea party shares with right wing populists the preference for the English only movement, balanced budgets, traditional family values, and conjoining church and state (many are evangelicals). Naturally, as conservatives, the tea party views a liberal press as a threat to America.

Tea party organizations propose free market globalization and deregulation, which they think will bring fiscal responsibility. They oppose "cap and trade" to reduce carbon emissions. They oppose earmarks (read: pork) by which politicians can put aside money in bills for pet projects

in their districts for their friends who will get them re-elected. It is really a vote buying scam (as of this writing 30Nov. the lame duck Senate rejected the earmarks ban).

The tea party and US politics

Make no mistake — the tea party has nothing to do with a real libertarian movement which aims at the equal distribution of political and economic power among citizens, since it does not challenge the authority of institutions and values of the existing socio-economic system, i.e. the market economy and representative “democracy”.^[1] The tea party plans to replace government with their own style of governance keeping in place the system of the market economy and representative “democracy” which is the cause of the multidimensional crisis we face. Therefore, the tea party will facilitate another crisis if they are able to push through their plans to defund social programs.

Tea party candidates could not have had such a stunning effect on the elections had they ran as independents. As part of the Republican Party the tea candidates have been accepting bags of corporate monies which would have been impossible in case they had taken part in the elections as independents. Unlimited corporate and super PAC monies now fully control all levels of government in the US. The likes of the Koch brothers (whose combined wealth is about \$25 billion), Karl Rove’s PAC “American Crossroads,” Norm Coleman’s “American Action Network,” or its Siamese twin American Action Forum bankroll tea parties and other rightwing groups.^[2] So money is not a problem for the tea party. With their stooges in control of the House, they are poised bearing in on controlling the Senate in the next election with their main ambition, to make Obama a one termer, fulfilled.

Markets rule OK

As it stands now, Congress is the premier corporate boardroom where professional politicians acting like CEOs prepare new and innovative ways to squeeze more money out of taxpayers and funnel it into corporate coffers. It is easy. Laws are made that have loopholes built in for corporations get around paying their fair share of taxes. Obama is also caving in to the Republican/Bush tax cuts. The middle class is disappearing as a result of the market economy’s requirement to keep wages depressed. People are forced to work longer and harder (if they have a job) for lower wages to maintain their standard of living. If they do not, their standard of living decays. Corporations will then find cheap labor at home and corporate politicians could then claim jobs have returned to America in order to better compete in the global economy. Yes, jobs without healthcare, without pensions, without social security (Obama’s deficit commission recently recommended a whole slew of benefit and spending cuts that will surely affect living standards). Obama recently stated, “Because the most important contest we face is not the contest between Democrats and Republicans. In this century, the most important competition we face is between America and our economic competitors around the world.”^[3] In effect he is saying political and open debate is off the table for the free market to do its work. Government is not accountable to the people, but to the market economy. Obama is telling us the democratic voice gets in the way of market initiatives. The business approach to reality we are told is the only way freedom and prosperity, forget democracy. The market economy is to be a fountainhead of creativity, as if

there were no creative people before the market economy. It is believed the market economy's incentive for monetary gain stimulates competition and entrepreneurship. But, limited government plus free and unregulated markets means only one thing: freedom for the economic elites which control the markets. This is the essence of right wing libertarianism embraced by the tea party.

And, of course, the “progressive” Obama reinforces the opening of markets as the function of government when he tells us, “The reason we’ve got a unparalleled standard of living in the history of the world is because we’ve got a free market that is dynamic and entrepreneurial, and that free market has to be nurtured and cultivated (...) as I plan for my trip later this week to Asia, the whole focus is on how are we going to open up markets so that American businesses can prosper, and we can sell more goods and create more jobs here in the United States. And a whole bunch of corporate executives are going to be joining us so that I can help them open up those markets and allow them to sell their products.”[\[4\]](#) The whole discussion on solving our problems revolves on the market economy stepping in to solve the multidimensional crisis we face.

However, recent history has shown the market economy will bring with it more crisis. Americans are now competing with workers in global markets. Soon your take away order from Dominos Pizza will be taken in Indonesia. America is outsourced. A fascist government is in place. Whatever Americans thought they have as rights are quickly being reversed by the dictates of the system of the market economy and representative “democracy”. A genuine democracy cannot be based on private property as Locke determined and erroneously taught. Representative “democracy” is in fact the political complement not of an economic democracy, which implies equal distribution of economic power among citizens, but of the capitalist market economy system and, as such, it is a device to keep power in the hands of the economic and political elite. They are the ones who take economic and political decisions without the consent of the governed and who argue that they are entitled to abolish social programs, privatize the public space and deregulate financial markets.

Here are some facts:

- in the US 1% of the population has a combined wealth of more than the bottom 90%.
- the stock market has recovered because the rich continually get richer — more so in depressions.
- the top 400 billionaire Americans got richer this year by 8% to a total of \$1.3 trillion, while mine and your net worth has dropped 2.8%.[\[5\]](#)

As the hand maiden to the market economy, representative “democracy” is more a fraud than it has been. The Congress, White House and Supreme Court ought to be run out of town on the corporations they ride on! The Congress, White House and Supreme Court express market principles not the principles of self-government and they therefore represent corporate interests which control the market not the people's interests. That is why it is imperative to throw out this illegitimate and tyrannical government. By throwing more and more people into poverty and suffering the government becomes destructive of its purpose while at the same the abject failure of the market economy is apparent. This is why the existing system needs to be abolished and replaced with Inclusive Democracy.[\[6\]](#)

The Supreme Court ruled this summer that corporations have the same right to free speech which is afforded to citizens (First Amendment of the Constitution). This allows unfettered corporate monies to flow into electoral campaigns in order to influence the results of elections. Because the Supreme Court determined corporations have the right to free speech, even though they are neither individuals nor citizens, they do not have to identify themselves or how much money they “donated” to financing campaigns. The Supreme Court’s decision that the corporations right to free speech is guaranteed by the First Amendment allows the economic elite to choose, purchase and decide who will become a member of Congress. Therefore, professional politicians and judges will be ever more obedient to their corporate masters. With campaign chests overflowing with corporate free speech, newly selected members of Congress will be more encouraged to apply market principles in the running of government. The Bush and Obama administrations along with Congress stimulated Wall Street with \$1.5 trillion in a matter of months and left Main Street in the dust. When the government is handed over to private interests, then the government ceases to be (even formally) of the people, it ceases to provide for their well being and therefore must be abolished. Thanks to its stable of Supreme Court jurists the political and economic elite have secured control over the three branches of government. The American people have been sold out. Voting is a useless formality just as the 15th Amendment allowing universal suffrage, since it took almost 100 years to enforce the Amendment, and now voting is all but superfluous. The New York Times reports, “secret donors spent at least \$138 million” on the mid-term elections in November.[\[7\]](#)

Government is openly a corporation now — the Corporate State of America (CSA) with its privileged elite controlling government. A market morality demands loyalty and now government is loyal to corporations and the people are left out. Since the people have been officially removed from the political process there is no need for them to be informed about the decisions the government makes. Politicians will ask us for their vote knowing full well elections are a charade. The system has the people in lockdown. With whom will you replace your representatives? Public debate? What is that? Free speech has been bought by the market economy (the more you own, the more free speech you have) i.e. by the political and economic elites controlling the market economy while the remaining population can only babble.

A US kind of fascism?

And make no mistake: guns are on the table if things go too far left as conservatives hold the laughable position that Obama is a socialist. The succession of government functions by the market economy will provide the economic and political elite work to abolish government discretionary funds (the social programs that kept their grandparents and parents afloat during the depression) and place government as the military arm of its investments in the guise of balanced budgets and not mortgaging the future. But this is exactly what they are doing. The tea party and their right wing populists peddle fear with its curriculum of intolerance.

The CSA now exhibits the main elements of fascism: admiration of the corporate state, anti-liberal and anti-immigrant sentiments, the adulation of war. It is in this sense that

governments take on more totalitarian roles. The current US security state evinces increased police and military power. The tea party movement and right wing doctrine align with speciesists on the superiority of domination, i.e., heteronomy, to maintain control over humans and Nature. Hence, their goal is to form the individual into a capitalist entrepreneur rather than a citizen.

Right wing populism uses their mean spirited mission that adulterates and modifies peoples' organizing activities so that they cannot discard obsolete ideas. In such a way the status-quo is upheld. Their mission establishes narrow-mindedness through accommodation, obedience, assimilation to and reproduction of the system of the market economy and representative "democracy" to preserve and brace inequity and compliance. As part of this populist militarization of consciousness more and more schools are obliging their students to wear uniforms as a method of cognitive skill building. Conformity and obedience are what public school students are learning. Cognitive skills that public school students will not discover as they are not intellectually ready for it is to interpret, analyze, evaluate, and distinguish in order to identify problems and form solutions. US students are not taught philosophy or basic logic. Thus they are not taught how to think and are easily accommodated within the System. All the students attending International High School in Paterson dress in the same unisex khaki pant and shirt uniform. Not only do principals want to make no distinction between student dress, but they also want to deny sexual differences. The uniforms are more apt for inmates in a jail. The students' minds are more locked up than ever in this supposed age of information, free speech, liberty, democracy and freedom.

A pseudo democracy or an Inclusive Democracy?

A crisis of confidence in "democracy" has been playing out for the past decade beginning with the Supreme Court coronation of George W. Bush, putting to sleep universal suffrage and in particular from the financial crisis created by the Wall Street maw. However, the discourse is dominated by right wing groups, conservative think tanks, tea party organizations, corporate media, etc. who want to fashion government by a privileged elite who will cut social programs (cannot have socialism in the US — what they want is a more fragmented and decayed society and hence the hypocrisy of their claim that they care!), continue financial deregulation and a second to none military to protect national interests — which are of course market interests. The American people do not trust their "representatives". This growing crisis of confidence in the government is losing the consent of the people, but as I said above the country is being split with the right wing controlling the discourse only because of the failure of the Left to offer a real alternative. The Left is essentially non-viable. It has no revolutionary vision or program. It supports reform and thus identifies with liberals and progressives of the Democratic party. There is no anti-systemic project to counter the hegemony of the system of the market economy and representative "democracy" that creates the multidimensional crisis we are facing.

When the next Congress convenes January 2011, the tea party will initiate its constitutional conservative caucus' seminars on principles of government whose first coach will be the ultra neoconservative activist Antonin Scalia.^[8] He will explain his *aboriginal* constitutional law in order to raze the Constitution itself and how those views can be expressed in congressional bills, which the tea party caucus along with their Republican hordes in the House will vote.^[9]

This will give them a powerful voting block to influence and control bills. Other extremist or right wing ideologues will lecture the tea party's caucus during fortnightly meetings on the constitutional role of government. In other words these right wing propaganda seminars are designed to ensure tea party values of small government, strong military, low taxes, and free market values are the basis of any legislation. The tea partiers plan, proved by their populist spanking of the Democrats this Fall, is to take over the whole of governing at the local, state and federal levels. No better fascist boot is the American public formed to fit. The tea party is a dangerous pseudo-libertarian movement who portray themselves as advocates for liberty, but they really are opponents to liberty. Their deeply reactionary platform intends that there will be no government to promote the general welfare of its citizens which, in a market economy, just ensures destabilization, guarantees inequity and asphyxiates liberty. Americans are becoming more distressed as one in seven or forty-four million, are dependent on food stamps, which represents a sixteen per-cent increase over last year.[10] As we can see the tea party and right wing populism poses a grave threat for autonomy and freedom.

Much of the country does not like the direction the nation is headed, but the solutions the tea party offer are wrong-headed reforms that leave intact the system that created the crisis: the market economy and representative "democracy". The tea party energizes outmoded ways of thinking that were supposed to have been overcome in the 50's and 60's civil rights movements. These populists never broke with the customs and illusions prevalent at the time. The close-minded tea party members threaten even conservative Republicans and Democrats.

So even though some 87% of Americans consider the US government is untrustworthy the choice remains real democracy or more barbarism. It is clear that only by replacing the market economy and representative "democracy" with inclusive democracy as a new antisystemic project can we remake society.[11]

[1] Takis Fotopoulos, "The End of Traditional Antisystemic Movements and the Need for A New Type of Antisystemic Movement Today," *Democracy & Nature* Vol. 7, No. 3 (November 2001): http://www.democracynature.org/vol7/takis_movements.htm

[2] Mission Statement, Patrick Henry Center: <http://www.patrickhenrycenter.com/>

[3] Press Conference by the President, November 3, 2010: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2010/11/03/press-conference-president>

[4] Ibid.

[5] William Alden, "400 Richest Americans Got Richer This Year, As Most Americans' Net Worth Tanked: Forbes", *The Huffington Post* (9/23/2010): http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/09/23/richest-americans_n_736182.html and 1% of the American population has the combined wealth of the bottom 90%: <http://afgen.com/feudal2.html>

[6] Takis Fotopoulos, "Beyond the Market Economy and Statist Planning: *Towards Democratic Planning as part of a Confederal Inclusive Democracy*", *The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy*, Vol.6, No.

2/3 (Spring/Summer 2010):

http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/journal/vol6/vol6_no2_takis_beyond_market_economy_and_statist_planni

[7] Editorial, "What the Secret Donors Want", *The New York Times* (November 22, 2010):

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/22/opinion/22mon1.html>

[8] Scalia's "originalist" reading of the Constitution is expressed in *Citizens United* where corporations were given the protected right to directly purchase elections. He contradicts originalist interpretation and represents his activist legislation of the Constitution as a living document.

[9] Rachel Slajda, "House GOP To Hold Hearings On 'Radicalization' of American Muslims," *TPM* (December 17, 2010):

http://tpmmuckraker.talkingpointsmemo.com/2010/12/peter_king_to_hold_hearings_on_radicalization_of_a.pl
and Jillian Rayfield, "Bachmann: Scalia Will Teach Constitutional Class For New Conservative Caucus", *TPM*, December 14, 2010: <http://tpmdc.talkingpointsmemo.com/2010/12/bachmann-scalia-evangelical-historian-will-teach-constitution-class-for-the-tea-party-caucus.php>

[10] Aaron Smith, "1 in 7 Americans rely on food stamps," *CNN* (December 21, 2010):

http://money.cnn.com/2010/12/21/news/economy/food_stamps/index.htm

[11] Takis Fotopoulos, "Inclusive Democracy as a political project for a new libertarian synthesis", *The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy*, Vol. 6, No.2/3, (Spring/Summer 2010), Barcelona, Centenary Conference (April 10, 2010):

http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/journal/vol6/vol6_no2_takis_CNT_Barcelona_2010.htm