

Property and Self

Nobody asked but ...

Hugh Breakey wrote at the “Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy” (IEP):

Concepts of property are used to describe the legal and ethical entitlements that particular people or groups have to use to manage particular resources. Beyond that most general definition of ‘property’ however, philosophical controversy reigns.

And we learned again, this morning at our Philosophy SIG, that controversy reigns. We had determined that we would pursue the following — *Resolved: Property rights are essential to freedom.*

We went hither, thither, and yon, but we did not resolve the central question. It seems to me that this is a central economic question confronting the human species, but to resolve it is to put statist and interventionist footprints all over the question. Voluntaryists are stuck on the fence of believing the resolution while being restricted in implementing much of its implications.

We did somewhat agree on these points:

- You can vote with your feet,
- You own yourself and the fruit of your own labor,
- Monsters such as Hitler can control you by taking away your self-ownership,
- Slavery has no justification,
- European property concepts were on a collision course with the property concepts of indigenous people,
- Eminent domain is an evil, not necessarily necessary,
- Charity must exist, but that need pre-existed the modern usurpation by the state,
- Roads must be built, but that need pre-existed the modern state , and
- Bureaucracies are a problem.

We didn’t have the time for another level of consideration, which may have entailed the Non-Aggression Principle (NAP), self-organizing phenomena, intellectual property, and defining “rights.”

We agreed on other points, disagreed (sometimes vociferously) on others, and didn’t break

up at the normal ending time.

— Kilgore Forelle