

Words Poorly Used #67 — Real Libertarian

Lately, I have been seeing a number of references to what “a libertarian” would think or do. An example is “would a libertarian support Israel?” But this blog is not about Israel or foreign policy, it is about the far more universal vice of labeling. One of the real problems with labeling is the *ad hominem* nature of such labels. Calling another person something so narrow as “libertarian” completely misses the point of how deep and wide and ever-changing a person can be. Libertarian is a perfectly good description of things, such as ideas or principles or dynamics. Conceptual things have more-or-less definite meanings, look for example at the non-aggression principle. I would call that principle part of the libertarian philosophy. There are others who may say that the self-defense exception is not roomy enough. These may be people who have a different idea about what non-initiation means. In any event, I don’t like wearing a label, particularly one that may include me among people with whom I may disagree. Furthermore, I don’t like being misled by labels. Please enlighten me, what possible reason could JEB come up with that would make me care that he believes he has “libertarian blood” in his veins? What reason does Rand Paul have for being coy about the things on which his father took a courageous stand? And in the instance of Ron Paul, even though he was the most libertarian officeholder I can imagine, he and I differed on the GOP, immigration, and public office as a public good.

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