

Patriotism, an Abomination

The ultimate travesty that comes from the belief in political “authority” is not that it helps evil people to commit evil (which it does), but that it dupes well-intentioned, decent human beings into accepting, condoning, or even committing evil themselves, without even noticing that they are doing so. That is one of the main reasons why I find July 4th to be so discouraging and depressing.

Every July 4th many millions of Americans, in one way or another, partake in the loud, ostentatious spectacle of celebrating “Independence Day,” having parades and picnics, waving flags and watching fireworks, in order to commemorate and honor ... what, exactly? Some people who, over two centuries ago, didn’t want to pay taxes on tea and paper? Or something about “taxation without representation”? Well, whatever it was, it definitely had something to do with being for freedom and against tyranny. Somehow.

And that’s about as precise as most American’s thoughts about “Independence Day” are. Indeed, the day is less about *thoughts* and more about *feelings*: feelings of camaraderie, or loyalty, maybe some rebellion, definitely a heavy dose of patriotism, and some general notion that we should be thankful for the “service” of some people who “fought for our freedoms,” or something like that. Never mind the specifics, just feel good, swell with pride when you hear nationalistic songs, and then proudly recite your oath of loyalty (written by a national socialist), swearing fealty to your political masters.

Wait, what? How exactly does “celebrating freedom” equate to swearing allegiance to a republic (which is a form of “government,” or ruling class)? Well, it doesn’t. And, for those who dare to look, this is where the true, diabolical nature of “patriotism” starts to rear its ugly head.

Once upon a time—a few short generations ago—nationalism and patriotism were openly war-like, an overt expression of pack-mentality and a sense of superiority. The basic tone was something like, “*We rule and you suck, so we’re gonna kill you and take your stuff.*” One empire after another has violently conquered vast territories driven by that evil, but at least honest, outlook. The agenda of those in power hasn’t changed much since then, but because most people today don’t think that killing his neighbor and stealing his stuff is okay—even if the guy looks, sounds, or thinks a bit differently—the propaganda and spin used by those in power is now a lot different, in order to deceive decent, peaceful people into supporting authoritarian agendas.

And patriotism is among the most powerful tools of the tyrants. Through prolonged exposure to feel-good nationalistic propaganda, the average American now has, inside his head, a jumble of unrelated, even contradictory concepts all muddled together into one

indecipherable mess. The average person will proudly proclaim that he loves his country, and will express that love by displaying the American flag. To him, the symbol vaguely represents some combination of freedom, and goodness, and everything that is familiar and comfortable to him—parades and fireworks and hot dogs and beer and apple pie.

And then, with those positive feelings in his heart, he will proudly recite something which is the precise opposite of freedom and independence: "*I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands.*" In short, all the feel-good, emotionalistic jingoism is there to make him enjoy *swearing loyalty to a ruling class*. That is what it means to giving an oath of *allegiance* to a *republic*. And every July 4th, many millions of Americans miss the drastic irony of celebrating an act of illegal, treasonous rebellion against the state (i.e., the signing of the Declaration of Independence) by swearing fealty to a ruling class.

And that was by design. People have been intentionally conditioned and trained to *confuse* the concepts of freedom, and "country," and independence, and "patriotism," and one's home and his neighbors, the things he loves, and the "government" that exploits and controls him. In short, "patriotism" is used by tyrants to exploit people's devotion to the *good* things they love and cherish, and twist it into an emotional attachment to a *political* entity—a ruling class—which is in every way the *arch enemy* of those good things (freedom, peace, justice, etc.).

That is why the sight of American flags everywhere, frankly, sickens me now. Of course, the people who display those flags aren't trying to condone oppression, imperialism and slavery. They mean well, and they imagine that they are cheering for liberty and goodness. But the symbol they are using literally represents a parasitical authoritarian monstrosity (ironically, one far worse than what the people here in 1776 were declaring independence from). If you want to know what public displays of nationalism look like to me, then look at some pictures of little German children waving the Nazi flag.

To a small child in the United States, the American flag means happy celebrations; it means his friends, his family, his home, his country (whatever a "country" is). But to a small child in the Middle East, that same flag can mean armed invaders, terror and death.

So which does it "really" mean? Well, you aren't really supposed to ponder that, especially when everyone around you is *feeling* so good (and thinking so little) while waving "Old Glory" around. But to try to pretend that it still represents freedom, while that same flag flies in front of IRS, ATF and DEA offices, while that same flag adorns the soldiers and war machines committing terrorism, torture and murder around the world, is the result of willful blindness. Loyalty to *freedom* and loyalty to one's "country" (a political entity) have always been, and will always be, incompatible. The American Revolution, at least in the minds of most of those who fought it, may have been about freedom, but the creation of a new

ruling class (by way of the Constitution) was not, no matter how hard the statist propagandists pretend otherwise. In fact, that is the real abomination of "Independence Day": watching power-happy crooks continue to hijack people's love of *freedom*, and twist and mangle it into *loyalty to a ruling class*, when the two are exact and precise opposites.

When people are happily celebrating, feeling positive, empowered and hopeful, part of me doesn't want to upset them by pointing out the hypocrisy, insanity, and downright evil that they are indirectly and inadvertently advancing. I don't particularly want to offend all the military veterans by pointing out that, while they are being showered with praise today, all they actually did was to act as both pawns and victims of the politicians' war machine. They never "fought for our freedoms." Yes, I want people to enjoy life, and be happy, and have hope for the future. But I also want them to understand that subservience and loyalty to imaginary political "authorities" is not the road that leads there. Ever.

That is why the modern-day spectacle of "Independence Day," where millions of Americans display their profound misunderstanding and confusion by giving lip service to "liberty and justice for all," while proudly flying the flag of their captors and oppressors, is just depressing to me.