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Definitions and Distinctions

Kevin Carson

January 19, 2005

FREE MARKET: That condition of society in which all economic transactions result from voluntary choice without coercion.

THE STATE: That institution which interferes with the Free Market through the direct exercise of coercion or the granting of privileges (backed by coercion).

TAX: That form of coercion or interference with the Free Market in which the State collects tribute (the tax), allowing it to hire armed forces to practice coercion in defense of privilege, and also to engage in such wars, adventures, experiments, “reforms”, etc., as it pleases, not at its own cost, but at the cost of “its” subjects.

PRIVILEGE: From the Latin *privi*, private, and *lege*, law. An advantage granted by the State and protected by its powers of coercion. A law for private benefit.

USURY: That form of privilege or interference with the Free Market in which one State-supported group monopolizes the coinage and thereby takes tribute (interest), direct or indirect, on

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Retrieved on 4th September 2021 from mutualist.blogspot.com

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all or most economic transactions.

LANDLORDISM: That form of privilege or interference with the Free Market in which one State-supported group “owns” the land and thereby takes tribute (rent) from those who live, work, or produce on the land.

TARIFF: That form of privilege or interference with the Free Market in which commodities produced outside the State are not allowed to compete equally with those produced inside the State.

CAPITALISM: That organization of society, incorporating elements of tax, usury, landlordism, and tariff, which thus denies the Free Market while pretending to exemplify it.

CONSERVATISM: That school of capitalist philosophy which claims allegiance to the Free Market while actually supporting usury, landlordism, tariff, and sometimes taxation.

LIBERALISM: That school of capitalist philosophy which attempts to correct the injustices of capitalism by adding new laws to the existing laws. Each time conservatives pass a law creating privilege, liberals pass another law modifying privilege, leading conservatives to pass a more subtle law recreating privilege, etc., until “everything not forbidden is compulsory” and “everything not compulsory is forbidden”.

SOCIALISM: The attempted abolition of all privilege by restoring power entirely to the coercive agent behind privilege, the State, thereby converting capitalist oligarchy into Statist monopoly. Whitewashing a wall by painting it black.

ANARCHISM: That organization of society in which the Free Market operates freely, without taxes, usury, landlordism, tariffs,

or other forms of coercion or privilege. “Right” anarchists predict that in the Free Market people would voluntarily choose to compete more often than to cooperate; “left” anarchists predict that in the Free Market people would voluntarily choose to cooperate more often than to compete.

Robert Shea and Robert Anton Wilson, *The Illuminatus! Trilogy* (New York: Dell, 1975) pp. 622–23