

LIBERTY AND EQUALITY

Libertarians are the enemies of egalitarianism, and all egalitarians, with exception of the anarchists, have been eager to use liberty while in the opposition, while squashing it once in power. So much for facts. As for theory, it has been claimed on both sides, right and left, that liberty and equality are mutually incompatible. On the right it has been claimed that liberty involves the freedom to stand out and obtain privileges at the expense of others. On the left, that if you grant everybody too much freedom, some will take advantage to oppress or exploit the majority. So, most left and right wing theorists agree that freedom and equality are mutually incompatible.

Nielsen (1985) has argued powerfully that liberty, far from being incompatible with equality, requires the latter. In other words, equality would be a necessary condition for liberty: in short, $L \rightarrow E$. ~~I shall argue the converse~~

However, the converse thesis, or $E \Rightarrow L$, is equally persuasive thesis, namely that equality requires liberty, or $E \Rightarrow L$ for short. The reason is obvious: without political freedom (liberty) we cannot fight for equality nor, once attained, can we work to sustain it. Since we admit both theses, we assert that equality and liberty are mutually equivalent or coextensive, i.e. $E \Leftrightarrow L$.