Twitter Thread by John Hayward



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For most of my lifetime, people on the Left focused on the perils of Big Business while ignoring, or actively embracing, the menace of Big Government. A great deal of the Right did the reverse. Both Bigs are perilous, especially when they fuse into a combined threat to liberty.

The growth of both government and corporate titans was inevitable, especially after a century of industrial and technological revolutions. Technology makes it possible to have larger endeavors, both public and private. Economies of scale bring enormous benefits.

Industrial advancements meant government had to get bigger to handle even its most basic responsibilities, like national defense. The World Wars erased the model of a tiny central government handling a few key elements of defense. Every war became a clash of industrial titans.

After the wars, people - not just voracious political opportunists, but many average voters and nearly all of the intelligentsia - fell in love with the notion of using the power of industrialized warfare to address domestic issues. Every crisis became "equivalent" to war.

People expected more of government, so it grew - and then it exploded. Meanwhile, Big Business was growing too, and it delivers tangible benefits that would be impossible to achieve with only small, decentralized local companies. There is an inescapable logic to corporate growth.

Unfortunately, what both Big Gov and Big Business also bring - especially when they fuse together, as they inevitably tend to do - is reduced liberty. At every level, from entrepreneurship to consumer and voter choice, there is less room for the little guy in a land of giants.

Of course Big Business wants to purchase political influence, and there are plenty of politicians eager to sell it. Big Gov gives them a nearly unlimited inventory of favors to sell. Any big corporation that refuses to do business with Big Gov will be crushed by those who do.

The last few years have demonstrated that we overlooked the threat coming from the other direction: the political class wants to use Big Business to exercise coercive powers that government is constitutionally forbidden to employ. Big Biz has become an instrument of politics.

This is most obvious in the case of restrictions on speech, where helpful Big Businesses with the "correct" political ideology can stifle dissenting speech in ways that even the most authoritarian politicians cannot, due to the First Amendment.

But there are other examples, and many more are coming. Statist politicians are delirious with the possibilities for getting around the Constitution by exercising compulsive power through corporate partners. That's how they'll defeat the 2nd Amendment too.

Why get dragged into doomed court battles over blatantly unconstitutional gun laws when you can just exercise totalitarian corporate power to make it all but impossible to profitably manufacture, or affordably purchase, firearms and ammunition?

The new frontier of American authoritarianism will leave citizens with numerous "rights" they still hold on paper, but cannot exercise in a practical, meaningful sense. You were not "forbidden" from speaking or acting... but you were rather formidably DISCOURAGED.

We all know monopolies are supposed to be bad, but we don't always ponder why. It's because monopolistic practices are a form of compulsion. They eliminate choices for both consumers and entrepreneurs. We correctly doubt any person or entity can be trusted with such power.

As the power of the Bigs - both Government AND Business - grows and mingles, we are left with fewer choices, fewer alternatives - and most importantly, less space to say "no," to refuse, to walk away from deals we don't like, to be left alone. /end