

The Faith and Good Works Party - In My (Utopian) Dreams

Written by Patricia Sohn

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PATRICIA SOHN, APR 28 2017

A friend recently asked me whether I really intended to argue that the United States should transition to a multi-party system; and, if so, what political parties did I have in mind? So, I thought about it. And here is my answer: Yes. The U.S. political system has become sufficiently corrupt that even voter-turnout is difficult to muster. The two main parties work together to maintain a "closed shop," not unlike conditions of corruption in labor unions and trusts (e.g., monopolies in business). The two parties together offer very little true ideological difference. They have worked together much more as a single ruling coalition than as opposing parties for several decades, at least. U.S. citizens have the right to *representation*.

What is happening with our current, ostensibly *two-party-system-become-single-coalition* is not acceptable. Whether it be at the hands of human error, hubris, or greed and corruption does not matter. It must be fixed. And there is an easy fix on the books that remains well within the democratic tradition that we value. Moreover, we have allies such as England that follow such systems and do so quite well and to great effect. That is, the multi-party system should be instituted in the U.S. Without it, the range of viewpoints that U.S. citizens inhabit every day is simply unrepresented in U.S. politics at the local, state, and national levels. And we know what happens when you get taxation without representation.

So, what political parties do we need? Here is my short-list of eight political parties for our new multi-party *representative, constitutional, and rule of law* democracy in the U.S. I believe that this sort of framework would shore up legitimacy, at home and abroad. It would alleviate the current social crisis that faces us on many streets, cities, and in many small corners of the good ol' U.S. of A.

1. *The Faith and Good Works Party*

A moderate, ecumenical and inclusive religious party on the libertarian left; this party would represent people from across various religions who find themselves in this quadrant of the political spectrum (e.g., liberal Catholics, Hindus, Buddhists, Taoists, Jews, Protestants, Muslims, Native Americans, and, yes, Confucians, etc., across racial and linguistic lines); a party seeking to ensure some degree of ethical and moral dimension in politics and public policy

2. *The Social Democratic Party*

Advocating a Trotskyite version of social democracy, not unlike those found in Israel and Norway, also on the Libertarian left but with specific economic and social policy goals that might differ substantially from the *Faith and Good Works Party*, depending upon the time period and the people involved

3. *The Old Republican Party*

A party representing the traditional conservative interests of less-invasive, non-expansive government, and laissez-faire economic policies at home and abroad

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4. *The Christian Democratic Party*

A conservative religious party representing conservative Christian interests on the statist right (e.g., representing Christian social policies that the party seeks to implement vis à vis the wider public); a conservative Protestant Party

5. *The Neoliberal Party*

A secular, neoconservative party representing statist economic and social policies, and their implementation at home and abroad (e.g., the authoritarians and civilizers among us, who, nonetheless, must be represented, as they are part of our population)

6. *The Ronald Thatcher Party*

A soft form of conservatism named for Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, a populist party on the right that bridges the space between libertarians and statist

7. *The Communist Party*

Representing the secular, statist far-left on economic policy and state intervention into private life, central control of the economic sphere, including jobs, etc. (again, they must be represented if we are to maintain social cohesion, as they are part of our population)

8. *The Green Party*

A party crossing lines of left and right in terms of economic policy; a party whose central concern is the maintenance of a clean environment

Among these four leftist and four rightist political parties, one primary difference distinguishing them is the degree to which they are statist (state interventionist), or anti-statist (libertarian). Another difference, the degree to which they are religious or secular, involves finally allowing religious people to be represented meaningfully in the polity. As mentioned in an earlier blog, a remarkably high percentage of Americans believe in God, and a significant plurality regularly go to Church/Mosque/Synagogue, etc. In this party schema, both left and right are represented in terms of economic policy. And, all parties would be open across ethnic, racial, and linguistic lines, although some might be more explicitly open along those lines than others.

This system would allow for just about all (legal) voices within the U.S. polity to be meaningfully heard within the political system itself. U.S. laws and policies regarding speech that incites violence, as well as hate speech, should be maintained as they stand.

My own party would be the *Faith and Good Works Party*. A good number of people very close to me would most likely go to the *Old Republican Party*. Others close to me would probably go to the *Social Democratic Party*. And, speaking anecdotally, people in my general world, all around, would likely be distributed across the other parties fairly equally.

Let us let go of the days in which politicians can tell us anything they want, and then go and do exactly the opposite once they are elected. Instead, let everyone stand for what s/he really believes. Let everyone have his/her day in the Sun, that is, his/her 10 minutes of fame. Let us all stand down when our policy idea turns out not to have enough support from the wider population (barring the involvement of constitutional principle). And let us relish our moments, few and far between, in which our particular issue of concern sails through with flying colors.

We do not deserve more than representation. But we do deserve representation. We are meant to be a representative democracy.

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We are not meant to be a nation of veto-players, nor of individually-maximizing rational actors – even among politicians. It may be how it *has been* done. It is also unethical and corrupt. It does not have to be how we allow politics to work from here on out in this, our *representative, constitutional, and rule of law* democracy.

About the author:

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