

# THE DILEMMAS OF SOCIALISM



BY LAWRENCE SAMUELS

## Application for Membership Society for Libertarian Life P.O. Box 4 Fullerton, CA 92632



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### THE LIBERTARIAN STATEMENT

We, as libertarians, affirm:  
 That full individual liberty is impossible in any society other than a voluntary one that agrees upon no one;  
 That men and women require the full and independent use of their own judgement in order to survive at an optimum level, and therefore have a natural right to do their own thing, providing that they do not physically harm or coercively restrict another individual's life, liberty, or state to no greater than that each person owns himself or herself exclusively, and is a slave to no one;  
 That the individual is best served by society when he or she is free from the forcefully imposed controls of others, acting alone or in concert (as a government);  
 That all forms of coercion and aggression are always immoral;  
 That the only system consistent with personal freedoms in the economic arena is one that does not interfere with free trade between individuals;  
 THEREFORE, we, as libertarians, resolve to oppose all forms of aggression by any State, Government, self-appointed savior, individual, or association of individuals. We further resolve to oppose taxation, or association of individuals. We further resolve to oppose "charity," and all programs forced onto individuals without their consent. It is time that the chains of authoritarianism in economics and morality be broken. Individual rights and coercion cannot co-exist. Liberty cannot be compromised, and we will settle for no less than freedom in our time.

### A FREE LIBERTARIAN SOCIETY

In high contrast, a free libertarian society possesses no power or authority to prevent an individual from living his own set of values or lifestyles. A libertarian society is not concerned with how an individual or group spends their time or labor. The libertarian is only concerned that no one abridges the life, liberty or property of another human with physical violence.

A libertarian society is an open universe. Unlike socialism, a free society has no desire or authority to prevent dissenting groups from organizing in its own communities. The individual owns his own life and if he wants to willingly starve in a socialist commune, it is his business. But, on the other hand, a socialist society would never permit a libertarian or any other commune to co-exist within its own boundary. This is the contradiction of socialism. Socialism would outlaw anything *not* socialistic, and yet a free society would not outlaw any aspect of socialism because of the lack of power to do so.

Boiled down to its primary ingredient, socialism is government. And government operates on the principle of the knife and the gun. It should be noted that it was the "German National Socialist Workers Party" which brought Hitler to power in 1933. And it was Hitler's "Twenty-five Point Programme" in 1920 which demanded social security, "communalized" stores, "agrarian reform," "welfare centres," expropriation of individually owned land, government operated education, socialized medicine and "THE GOOD OF THE STATE BEFORE THE GOOD OF THE INDIVIDUAL." Fundamentally, there is little difference between socialism and the National Socialism of fascism.

The basic trouble with socialism is that it desires to socialize, control and remodel society without denying individual freedom. But the enemy of freedom is coercion, force and aggression. Man cannot be free if he is subjected to the whims of the State, a majority or another person. And since socialism is collective, it does not hesitate to step on the individual. To the socialist the group comes first, and the individual last. Those who refuse to blindly follow the edicts of the people State, are subjected to abusement (Mao once said, "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun"). Whose fooling who? Socialism is no more capable of protecting freedom than the Boston Strangler was capable of protecting a sorority.

Originally, the socialist never meant socialism to be synonymous with slavery and coercion, but it is nevertheless. It's time to abandon socialism to the buzzards and authoritarians.

*In socialism, there is but one master, which is the State; but the State is not a living person, capable of suffering and happiness. Socialism benefits none but the demagogues, and is emphatically, the organization of universal misery. Socialism gives us but one class, a class of slaves.*

William B. Greene, 1849

It wasn't meant to be that way. Many of the early socialists conceived socialism as being the best philosophy and economic system to abolish usury and uplift the plight of the poor. But freedom was never intended to be sacrificed in the name of security. Yet, by the time William Greene wrote *Equality* in 1849, many socialists became aware of the anti-freedom contradictions in socialism, and fled from beneath its banner.

Writing two years after Marx penned his manifesto, Greene foresaw the dilemma of socialism, the contradiction of its principles with the mediocrity resulting when put to practice. To the former socialists of the 19th century, the dilemma of socialism was its promise of paradise pitted against its shoddy performance. Almost every socialist experiment in the 19th century folded in disaster and disarray within a year or two of its grand opening.

One such deserter of socialism, Josiah Warren (1798-1874), joined Robert Owen's *New Harmony* commune with optimism. The optimism was short-lived. Almost a misnomer from the start, *New Harmony* was named as inappropriately as Charlemagne's Holy Roman Empire; harmony was the last virtue to be displayed in Owen's Utopia.

Slicing away the frivolous trimmings of *New Harmony's* societal structure, Warren discovered the problem. Warren observed the following:

It seemed that the difference of opinion, tastes, and purpose increased just in proportion to the demand for conformity.... We had tried every conceivable form of organization and government. We had a world in miniature. We had enacted the French Revolution over again with despairing hearts instead of corpses as a result.... It appeared that it was nature's own inherent law of diversity that had conquered us...our "united interests" were directly at war with the individualities of persons and circumstances and the instinct of self-preservation (written in 1856).

By the 1850's, a number of leading American radicals had abandoned socialism because it promised one thing and delivered another; one day promising a chicken in every pot and the next day confiscating the pot. But socialism is more than empty promises; it is a closed universe.

#### A CLOSED WORLD

Simply put, each individual is different and unique. And again, simply put, the socialist refuses to recognize this fact. Socialism is harmful to the health of individuality because it negates *alternatives*. That is, in the socialistic quest to remove inequality and poverty, the system institutionalizes one set of values, one set of lifestyles and one set of axioms for everyone to live by. The point is, man does not live by one set of values alone.

Under socialism, every member of society is forced eventually to march to the tune of the Pied Piper of Hamelin. Free, individual choice is eliminated and alternatives outlawed as the 'Worker State' determines all policy. In a socialist environment, everything and everyone becomes permanently glued to statecraft, twisted to fit preconceived ideological molds, and finally discarded like an old campaign promise. Socialism is politics; it is one continuous Watergate soap opera, and it is one never ending all-night-long committee meeting. Those who desire to remain above the water level must stuff the ballot box.

The mammoth dilemma of socialism is that it tries to be '*everything to everybody and nothing to nobody*' simultaneously. That is, socialism promises what it cannot deliver. Since socialism demands the "state ownership or control of all means of production," for instance, it could never simultaneously provide for an environment where a free press could survive. The contradiction is apparent. If the government owns all of the printing presses, would it permit its own newspapers to criticize its own government policy? Of course not. Socialist presses will print only socialist propaganda. And a socialist government will usually only permit a socialist press to exist within its boundaries.

There are some exceptions to this general rule, of course. There are varying degrees of socialism, and democratic socialism, as practiced in Sweden, for example, is somewhat less extreme in its restriction of civil liberties than the more authoritarian socialism in Cuba and China. However, the point is that *any* socialist system establishes the power and legal precedent

to restrict any and all liberties to whatever degree or extent it deems as necessary in the name of the *public interest*.

#### CONFISCATION

In essence, socialism means confiscation of individual property. It means that the small businessman who is barely keeping his head above bankruptcy is at the mercy of the State. It means individuals of little or great wealth will be forced at the barrel of a gun to surrender all belongings to a Worker State or a neighborhood committee if the socialist order so. To hit closer to home, socialism has no restrictions which prevents it from expropriating your \$499 Panasonic stereo unit or your souped-up Chevy with the racing strips. I am not saying that a socialist government will confiscate your wristwatch. What I am saying is that they could confiscate your wristwatch. Nothing prevents such confiscation except quick changing government policy. If the socialist thought that the confiscation of personal property would benefit the people and promote the common good, they would not hesitate to perform such seizures. (*Remember, under socialism property belongs to the group, never to the individual*).

The idea that should be understood is that if the socialist State is big enough to give the people everything they want, it is surely big enough to take away everything the people have. It might be nice for some to see the government confiscate the large holdings of rich individuals, but it must be remembered, if it can happen to the rich it can happen to the poor just the same. And if the people are prohibited from owning property, rich and poor alike, then the people do not own themselves. If this is the case, then the individual is working for the benefit of another, and is therefore a slave.

And what of dissenters? What of those persons who oppose living in a closed world? What if the dissenter resists conformity, refusing to be re-educated? Will the dissenter be permanently silenced or slapped with a Russian "*Love It Or Leave It*" sticker and deported like Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn? Or will the so-called counter-revolutionary be threatened with unemployment, firing all dissenting workers until they are starved into submission? All is extremely possible since the socialist hierarchy controls what it owns and owns what it controls.