

What Americans Must Know About Socialism

Donnie Dickerson 01/March/2020 at 14:59

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Here are the realities of socialism and its grandmaster, Karl Marx.

Socialism has never worked anywhere.

Socialism in all its forms — Marxism-Leninism in the Soviet Union, Maoism in China, “state socialism” in India, “democratic socialism” in Sweden, National Socialism in Nazi Germany — has never come close to realizing the classless ideal of its founding father, Karl Marx. Instead, socialists have been forced to adopt a wide range of capitalist measures, including private ownership of railroads and airlines (United Kingdom), special economic zones (China), and open markets and foreign investment (Sweden).

Mikhail Gorbachev took over a bankrupt Soviet Union in 1985 and desperately tried to resuscitate “socialism” (i.e., communism) through perestroika (restructuring) and glasnost (openness). He failed abjectly and was forced to preside over the dissolution of the once mighty Soviet empire on Christmas Day, 1991, seven decades after Lenin mounted a truck in St. Petersburg to announce the triumph of the Bolshevik Revolution.

In the late 1970s, Deng Xiaoping abandoned the rigid excesses of Maoist thought and adopted a form of communism with “Chinese characteristics” that was more capitalist than socialist in several ways. Deng, however, also ensured the Communist Party’s control of any new homeland enterprise or foreign investment.

After decades of sluggish growth and bureaucratic inefficiency, India rejected state socialism in the 1990s and shifted to a capitalist approach that spawned the world’s largest middle class of more than three hundred million (nearly equal to the entire U.S. population). Sweden is often described as a “socialist” country, but is not and never has been socialist. It is a social democracy in which the means of production are owned primarily by private individuals. Among the proofs of its commitment to a market economy is that Sweden ranked number 19 worldwide in the Heritage Foundation’s 2017 Index of Economic Freedom.

Socialism’s failure to deliver on its promises of bread, peace, and land to the people is confirmed by the repeated, open resistance of dissidents: in Hungary in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968, Poland in 1980 with the formation of Solidarity, China’s Tiananmen Square in 1989, and in present-day Cuba with the resolute Ladies in White who parade every Sunday after mass to call attention to the many jailed dissidents including their husbands and sons.

Socialism failed in America in the early 19th century when the English philanthropist Robert Owen launched New Harmony, a “village of cooperation” on the banks of the Wabash River in Indiana. Volunteers flocked to the socialist experiment, but most were better at sitting in a chair than making one. Within a few years, New Harmony collapsed, and Owen went home.

The founding father of socialism is the messianic Karl Marx.

Marx was an atheist socialist who insisted that his was the only “scientific” socialism based not on wishful thinking but the inexorable laws of history. The whole of history, declared Marx and his close collaborator and friend Friedrich Engels, is the history of the class struggle between the proletariat and

the bourgeoisie. The inevitable collapse of capitalism and the victory of the proletariat would end the conflict and usher in a classless society and pure socialism or communism (Marx used both terms interchangeably). He listed 10 necessary measures as steps along the way to his utopia, including a progressive income tax, the abolition of private property, free education for all, and centralization of the means of communication and transport in “the hands of the state.”

Much of the appeal of Marxism was its scathing critique of capitalism and its 19th century excesses, which included 16-hour work days and Dickensian working conditions. It was the early days of the Industrial Revolution when exploitation of workers, young and old, was widespread and horrific. By the end of the century, much had changed. Capitalism was not breaking down under the pressure of industrial concentration as Marx had predicted. To the contrary, economies were expanding and the lives of workers were slowly but demonstrably improving. Rather than developing into revolutionaries (as predicted by Marx), the workers were becoming reformers and even bourgeoisie.

The core philosophical weakness of Marxism was the founder’s insistence that his version of Hegelian dialectic — thesis, antithesis, synthesis — was scientific and without flaw. He asserted that feudalism had been replaced by capitalism which would be replaced by socialism in an irreversible process. But it is now close to 200 years since the publication of *The Communist Manifesto*, and capitalism rather than socialism dominates much of the global economy. In the Heritage Foundation’s 2018 Index of Economic Freedom, 102 countries, many of them less developed or emerging economies, showed advances in economic growth and individual prosperity. Economic freedom improved globally for the sixth year in a row.

Marx was not the first utopian. Plato had his Republic, and Thomas More his *Utopia*. They were centrally ruled and devoid of individual choice. More’s *Utopia* was a highly regimented “paradise” in which all citizens dressed alike and lived in identical houses and where private discussion of public affairs incurred the death penalty. Marx insisted that his socialist *Utopia* would be different because it would be classless and free of all nationalist sentiment because the nation state would have withered away. Ever melodramatic, he called on the “workingmen of all countries” to unite against the ruling classes — they had “nothing to lose but their chains.”

It was powerful rhetoric, but was Marx’s socialist world any more possible than the utopias proposed by Plato and More and other central planners? How good a historian and how accurate a prophet was Karl Marx?

Contrary to Marx, feudalism broke down, not because of economic contradictions, but because of the new trade routes which helped England and other countries move from a land-based to a money-based economy. Capitalism did not emerge naturally as the antithesis of feudalism but through a series of events including the emergence of the Puritan ethic, inventions like the cotton gin, the individualism of the Enlightenment, and the emergence of classical liberalism in the writings of thinkers like Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill.

Nor did Marx anticipate that workers would become increasingly affluent, independent, and even bourgeois. He did not foresee that capitalists would address problems such as unemployment and inflation, monopolies, Social Security and health care, and the proper balance of private and public control over the means of production.

Furthermore, the working class has not fallen into greater and greater misery. The industrial nations have seen a dramatic rise in the standard of living of the average worker. The middle class has not disappeared but expanded. As the esteemed economist Paul Samuelson wrote: “As a prophet Marx was colossally unlucky and his system colossally useless.”

Socialism forbids the age-old right of private property.

In *The Communist Manifesto* Marx says, “The theory of the communists may be summed up in the single sentence: Abolition of private property.” He knew that depriving individuals of this basic freedom would not be easy and that dictatorship by the proletariat — and violence — would be required. However, the abolition of private property is necessary, Marx argued, because it is the central cause of the perennial clash between the classes.

But private property is not just any right; it is integral to civilization. There never was a time or place when all possessions were collectively owned. There is no convincing evidence, writes the Harvard historian Richard Pipes, that there were societies that knew “no boundary posts and fences” or ignored “mine” and “thine.”

It is often argued that socialism is a secular version of Christianity, referring to Acts 2-5, which describes the early Christians as having “all things in common.” It is true that following Pentecost, Christians sold their possessions and property and shared the results with “any [that] might have need.” But there is a critical distinction between Christians and socialists: Jesus urged his followers to give up their possessions while socialists want to give away the possessions of others. St. Paul is sometimes quoted as saying that “money is the root of all evil.” What he actually wrote in a letter to Timothy was that “love of money is the root of all kinds of evil.” His indictment, as the former AEI president Arthur Brooks has pointed out, was of an inordinate attachment to money.

More secular sources about the consequential role of private property can be cited. In *The Constitution of Liberty*, Nobel Laureate Friedrich Hayek writes that the recognition of private property is “an essential condition for the prevention of coercion.” He quotes Lord Acton as saying that “a people averse to the institution of private property is without the first element of freedom” and Henry Maine as asserting: “Nobody is at liberty to attack [private] property and to say at the same time that he values civilization. The history of the two cannot be disentangled.” In view of the alleged lack of individual liberty in classical Greece, writes Hayek, it deserves mention that in 5th century Greece the sanctity of the private home was so recognized that even under the rule of the “Thirty Tyrants,” a man could save his life by staying at home. The power of private property indeed.

Socialism insists that human nature is malleable, not constant.

Karl Marx’s attitude toward human nature flows from Enlightenment thinkers like John Locke, Thomas Hobbes, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who challenged the traditional idea of a fixed human nature bestowed by God. Rousseau wrote, “We do not know what our nature permits us to be.” Locke saw human nature as a *tabula rasa* — a blank page. Hobbes famously described man’s natural state as “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short.”

Marx borrowed from the Enlightenment to say that human nature is intrinsically malleable. The Communist state established by Lenin in Russia in November 1917, wrote Richard Pipes, was “a grandiose experiment in public education” to create an entirely new type of human being — Soviet Man.

Christian theology with its idea of a fixed human nature infuriated Marx, who was not just an atheist but a God-hater who denounced religion as “the opium of the people.” His disciples, led by Lenin, always targeted the churches when they came to power. They initiated without apology a campaign of terror, shutting down churches, executing priests and bishops and violating nuns. The horrors were justified as part of the class-cleansing Marx envisioned.

The Founders of the American Revolution rejected those who believed that man was born without any imprint and sided with those who accepted that man was born in the image of God. As the Declaration of Independence states, all men “are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights.” The Founders disagreed with those who thought man was perfectible and instead took the Christian position that man’s nature was fallen.

As Madison famously observed, “If men were angels there would be no need for government” and “ambition must be made to counteract ambition.” It is a reflection of human nature, Madison said, that “such devices should be necessary to control the abuses of government.” George Washington summed up the Founders’ realism: “We must take human nature as we find it, perfection falls not to the share of mortals.”

The essential difference between the visions of Karl Marx and George Washington, aside from the question of human nature, is that in Marx’s socialist world there is a dictatorship of the Communist Party, while in a liberal democracy like the United States “We the People” tell the government what to do, the government does not tell the people what to do.

Socialism depends upon dictatorship to attain and remain in power.

Without exception, every socialist leader from Vladimir Lenin to Fidel Castro promised to initiate basic political freedoms such as free elections, a free press, and free assembly. None fulfilled those promises.

Personal experience with this common falsehood has been eloquently provided by six famous intellectuals in *The God That Failed*. They describe their journey into Communism and their exit when they encountered the gigantic gap between their vision of a socialist Utopia and the totalitarian reality of the socialist state. All of them, points out editor Richard Crossman, chose Marxist socialism because they had lost faith in democracy and were willing to sacrifice “bourgeois liberties” in order to defeat Nazi Germany. Their socialist conversion was rooted in despair with Western values that produced the Great Depression and permitted Fascism.

Their conversion was greatly strengthened by what Crossman calls “the Christian conscience” even among those who were not orthodox Christians. The emotional appeal of Marxist socialism lay in the sacrifices, material and spiritual, which it demanded as well as the unswerving obedience to the socialist line no matter how radically or quickly it changed. A case in point: Communists condemned Adolf Hitler throughout the 1930s until the summer of 1939, when Joseph Stalin and Hitler signed a non-aggression pact. Immediately, all “true” socialists were obliged to reverse course and hail the agreement as a major step toward peace. It was, in fact, a cynical deal that allowed the Nazis and the Soviets to invade and divide up Poland, thereby precipitating World War II.

With the Hitler-Stalin pact, scales fell from the eyes of the six intellectuals, starting with the Hungarian novelist Arthur Koestler, who now condemned the infamous show trials ordered by Stalin: “At no time and in no country have more revolutionaries been killed and reduced to slavery than in Soviet Russia.” The American black writer Richard Wright wrote, “At that [socialist] meeting I learned that when a man was informed of the wish of the Party he submitted, even though he knew with all the strength of his brain that the wish was not a wise one, was one that would ultimately harm the Party’s interests.”

After visiting the Soviet Union, the French Nobel Laureate André Gide said bluntly, “I doubt whether in any country in the world — not even in Hitler’s Germany — have the mind and spirit ever been less free, more bent, more terrorized and indeed vassalized — than in the Soviet Union.” Gide said that “the Soviet Union has deceived our fondest hopes and shown us tragically in what treacherous quicksand an honest revolution can founder.”

The American journalist Louis Fisher, once an enthusiastic chronicler of Soviet economic advances, recounted how much the Soviet Union had changed: “Ubiquitous fear, amply justified by terror, had killed revolt, silenced protest, and destroyed civil courage. In place of idealism, cynical safety-first. In place of dedication, pursuit of personal aggrandizement. In place of living spirit, dead conformism, bureaucratic formalism, and the parrotism of false clichés.”

So it was in the Soviet Union under Stalin; so it has been in every socialist experiment since the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. The Soviet-Nazi agreement was the cracking point for many

intellectuals in the West, including the American Louis Fisher, who accused Stalin of building an imperialistic militaristic system in which he is, and his successor will be, “the Supreme Slave Master.” How then, Fisher asked, can anyone interested in the welfare of people and the peace and progress of humanity support such a system? “Because there is rottenness in the democratic world?” he asked and answered, “We can fight the rottenness. What can Soviet citizens do about Stalinism?”

It took decades, but the citizens of all the nations behind the Iron Curtain finally threw off their chains in 1989, and wrote finis to Soviet communism. Tragically, there are still more than 1 billion people living today under the Marxist socialist regimes of China, Cuba, North Korea, Vietnam, and Laos.

Socialism is responsible for the deaths of more than 100 million victims.

If you were asked how many Jews died in the Holocaust, you would probably respond, “Six million.” We learned the correct answer in our schools and universities, through the books and articles we have read, the movies and television programs we have watched, our conversations with families, friends, and colleagues. There is a continuing campaign to remind us of the Holocaust and to declare, “Never again.” And rightly so. The Holocaust carried out by the Nazis — their deliberate campaign of genocide — was the greatest evil of the 20th century.

But if you were asked, “How many victims of communism have there been?” You would probably hesitate and respond — “Five million? Twenty million? Fifty million?” Few of us would know the right answer: at least 100 million men, women, and children, more than all the deaths of all the major wars of the 20th century. Communism committed the great crime of the last century.

It is a number difficult to comprehend, let alone accept. Surely, you might say, there could not have been that many. But we can be certain of saying that there have been at least 100 million victims of communism because of the painstaking research of the editors of *The Black Book of Communism*, published by the Harvard University Press. They document that each and every Marxist socialist regime has prevailed by way of a pistol to the back of the head and a death sentence in a forced labor camp.

There is no exception whether in China under Mao Zedong, North Korea under Kim Il Sung, Vietnam under Ho Chi Minh, Cuba under Fidel Castro, Cambodia under Pol Pot, or Ethiopia under Mengistu Haile Mariam.

SO,,,,, Why Would Anyone Want To Live Under A Socialist Dictatorship ?

NOT MY AMERICA , If This is Your Desire ,Your Choice Is Your Own ,Pick A COUNTRY You Can Be Happy In,,,,,