

The positive approach to personal rights

“Socialism and communism both imply ‘public (or communal) ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange’, and, in the light of Russian and British experience, whatever may be the outward form, this means in practice state control.” From: *The Socialist Tragedy* by Ivor Thomas, M.P., 1951, page 24.

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THE FOUNDATION FOR
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The virulent type of communism that threatens the world today is this: the common ownership of the product of all by compulsion. It simply means that what we produce is never our own—really—to use as we deem best. Karl Marx put it well, “. . . from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs”—with the state determining which is which.

Socialism is the state ownership or control of the means of production—this is but another way of expressing the communization of the product of all by compulsion.

NO DIFFERENCE

The difference between communism and socialism? For all practical purposes, none! Both deny private property. Both deny that the fruits of one's labor are one's own. Instead, they affirm that the fruits of one's labor are at the disposal of some authority. Under each of these sister doctrines, men attempt to usurp the role of God—men or-

ganized as a police force attempting to cast other men in the images of their own desires.

INFLATION IS COMMUNISM

Governmental inflation of the money, for example—and every single measure which goes to induce it—is communistic, pure and simple. Such increases in the volume of money take value away from all existing money—as would counterfeiting. The reason for these communizing measures and the resultant inflation is that most persons, in every walk of life, believe in them—controls and subsidies, etc.—and openly promote their expansion.

There is no antidote to communism except a personal immunity to this ideological disease. And this immunity to the communizing idea is impossible except as a belief in private property grows and matures to take its place.

BASIS OF A CONCEPT

The private property concept, in turn, is grounded in numerous beliefs, five of which are:

1. The individual person has inherent significance.
2. An individual is best able to manage his own affairs.
3. The individual has the right to possess what he himself has produced.
4. The individual has the right freely to exchange his own goods or services.
5. The individual has faith that charity will be extended toward those in need; that charity must be strictly a voluntary response, and that this response will be practiced only where and when the state does not pre-empt the granting of alms from confiscated sources.

NO EASY TASK

This belief in private property and confidence in one's self and one's fellow men—the only practical, down-to-earth antidote to communism and socialism—is not easy to come by in these days when common ownership by compulsion enjoys its greatest popularity in America as a way of life. While even the small child behaves in a “private property way,” it is certain that such instinctive behaviors cannot stand against the false promises and the plausibilities of the authoritarians. This withstanding quality requires a rationale, in short, logical supports. These, in turn, require both deep thought and study.

REASON FOR EXISTENCE

The Foundation for Economic Education has only one reason for its existence: to probe deeper into the many aspects of the philosophy of freedom; to learn more about its moral, social, and economic meaning; to find ways of explaining these findings with ever-increasing clarity, and of inspiring a similar spirit of inquiry on the part of others in order that they may join in this search for truth and better explanations of it.

Practicing the very philosophy we preach, the Foundation's work is financed solely from current donations, given voluntarily in the absence of pressure. Reliance is entirely on voluntary responses of those who have watched our work and who wish to see it maintained and expanded. This is not unlike the free market where goods are offered, to be bought or not as the consumer chooses—except that the *quid pro quo* is in the form of a better world for our children and their children, rather than a direct and an immediate benefit. Freedom and personal rights are “social

capital" which we shall not have for tomorrow unless we save it today.

BASIS OF JUDGMENT

How can one tell whether work of this kind is useless or worthy? Here are two criteria we use in passing judgments on our own efforts:

1. Is the work respected by and acceptable to those who are capable of dealing in ideas and, at the same time, have means of communicating ideas? Categorically, such persons are teachers, clergymen, writers, and others in all walks of life who have the talents for understanding and communicating.
2. Is there evidence that the work is developing a substantial number of persons accomplished in explaining the philosophy of the free market, voluntary society, and limited government?

AN INVITATION

These criteria are tough for us to meet, but we want our co-operators to use them. Inspection of the Foundation's work, with such tests in mind, is invited.

The extent to which we continue and expand this educational effort is thus determined entirely by funds voluntarily supplied. If what we are doing now is considered worthy, then—in our opinion—we can, with equal worthiness, expand the effort to several times its present scope. Any of the educational and business leaders who serve on the Foundation's Board of Trustees (all except the President serve without any compensation whatever) stand ready to report on the operation.

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