



Written by [John Larabell](#) on December 9, 2019

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A Senator Stands Up to Socialism

The Case Against Socialism, by Rand Paul, New York: Harper Collins, 2019, 354 pages, hardcover.

Rather than write a book detailing lofty plans to make America a better country via conservatism, a book lamenting the lack of decency and good old-fashioned values in our modern culture, or a feel-good volume talking about dreams and all the good things that unite us (not that there's anything wrong with such books), Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky.) did something perhaps more necessary and timely given our current political situation: He wrote a book attacking socialism.



Great books mounting an intellectual case against socialism have come from the minds of academics such as Ludwig von Mises, Friedrich Hayek, and Milton Friedman, but these, for the most part, were not really written for the “man on the street.” The fact that a well-known U.S. senator has written a book against socialism aimed at a popular audience is exciting. And Senator Paul's book certainly is accessible; it's easy to read but still filled with plenty of good information to make the case against that dangerous ideology that continues to capture the imaginations of Americans, especially the youth.

Rather than merely focusing on one aspect of socialism, attempting to attack it from an economic perspective, for instance, Senator Paul looks at the whole spectrum of problems with the Marxist mentality.

The Case Against Socialism is divided into six parts, each containing between three and 10 chapters. In Part 1, “Because Eating Your Pets Is Overrated — Socialism Creates Poverty,” Paul exposes the corruption and poverty that are endemic to socialist regimes the world over. Using examples ranging from Venezuela to corrupt socialist regimes in Africa, he demonstrates that a top-down system of controlling a nation's economy always leads to shortages, inefficiencies, and poverty. Capitalism, Paul points out, is actually better for the poor, and a nation's level of income inequality is really not a good indicator of the standard of living of all of its citizens. For instance, while there is great income inequality in United States, the poor live much better here than in socialist countries that might have less income inequality. In other words, who cares if everyone is equal when they're all equally miserable?

“But we don't want Venezuela, we want Denmark or Sweden” is the retort given by starry-eyed millennials who yearn for socialism in America. Is that so? Paul addresses this issue in Part 2, “Capitalism Makes Scandinavia Great.” Paul should be especially commended for including this section in his book, since the tired portrayal of Scandinavia as The Place That Makes Socialism Work needs to be refuted at every opportunity. Indeed, this is the longest part of the book, with 10 chapters devoted to debunking the myth of the Nordic socialist utopia. Paul demonstrates that success in Scandinavia was actually produced by capitalism, and the introduction of the much-lauded welfare states slowed down



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this success to the point where the countries are now making moves toward privatization and lowering taxes. In fact, many Danes reject the appellation “socialist.” Danish journalist Annegrethe Rasmussen remarked, “You have nothing but capitalism in Denmark. We have one of the lowest corporate tax rates in the world. But once the capitalists have done their work, we just tax the hell out of our people.” And Danish economist Lars Christensen says, “When I hear Bernie Sanders talk about himself as a democratic socialist, it’s a little bit 1970s. The major political parties on the center-left and the center-right would oppose many of the proposals of Bernie Sanders on the regulatory side as being too leftist.” Scandinavian countries practice what Paul labels “welfarism”: They have market economies with low corporate taxes but high personal income taxes and bloated, inefficient welfare states — which, as mentioned above, are now seeing more privatization and competition.

In Part III, “A Boot Stamping on the Human Face Forever — Socialism and Authoritarianism,” Senator Paul explains how socialist governments move toward authoritarianism. He points out the fact that, much to the dismay and denial of today’s Progressives and lovers of socialism, Adolf Hitler was a socialist. The only major ideological difference between the National Socialist German Worker’s Party (Nazis) and American Progressives is that the Nazis believed that their socialist state was only for ethnic Germans.

Part IV, “Socialism Doesn’t Create Equality,” begins with Paul noting,

It is important to remember that the post-World War II revolution that brought Mao to power was fueled by the promises of socialism. Mao promised to redistribute wealth and abolish private property. Mao promised to abolish income inequality and create a more equal society. Anything sound familiar?... Mao and Stalin and Hitler didn’t come to power promising tyranny. They came to power promising equality.

Equality sounds great, until it has to be implemented by force.

In Part V, “Where Are These Angels? The Philosophy of Socialism,” Paul debunks the idea that a socialist utopia will be run by wise, virtuous people akin to Plato’s “philosopher kings.” He explains what should be obvious to any thinking person: Entrusting people with total power can only lead to tyranny. There are no purely benevolent, disinterested people who could rule the country as Yoda-like figures, dispensing wise advice to create a perfectly harmonious society. In other words, “power tends to corrupt.” Paul includes a poignant quote from Milton Friedman in this regard: “I think you’re taking a lot of things for granted. Just tell me where in the world you find these angels who are going to organize society for us.” Our dear leaders will cease to be angels as soon as they run into opposition to their plans.

Part VI, “Never Let a Crisis Go to Waste: Socialism and Alarmism,” examines the use of crises, either real or imagined, to implement the socialist agenda. Poverty, racism, income inequality, lack of healthcare coverage, and climate change are good examples. Paul pays particular attention to the issue of climate change and focuses on the Green New Deal put forth by socialist media darling Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. He notes, too, how any dissent against the alarmism is stifled in a socialist society. Currently in America, we see dissent smashed by social-media deplatforming, mainstream-media smears, and corporations pulling advertising or affiliations. Under full-blown socialism, the government would be doing the censoring. Think hate-speech laws in other Western countries, with “hate” being whatever the ruling elites say it is.



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Paul includes in this part of the book many recent examples of media hysteria coming from the Left, such as the reaction to the recent hate-crime hoaxes (think Jussie Smollett) and the “smirking” Covington kid, Nick Sandmann. He also includes some instances of left-wing hysteria and violence in which he was personally involved, such as the Bernie Sanders supporter shooting up the congressional baseball game and the severe assault he suffered at the hands of a liberal neighbor while he was mowing his lawn.

In the book’s Afterword, Senator Paul calls for finding common ground. He offers several examples of how he has worked with Democratic senators on bills that would help the cause of liberty, and laments the fact that America is so divided. Much of this divide, Paul feels, is because of the media. One area in which Senator Paul does not believe we should compromise and find common ground, however, is on the issue of socialism:

But on socialism, or its fellow traveler, welfarism, it is unlikely that we will find common ground. In fact, I’m not inclined to split the difference between socialism and capitalism. I will continue to fight for a free market economy because it is the only system consistent with liberty and the only system that provides greater prosperity and opportunity for all. If your goal is to help the poor become better off, there is no more humanitarian economic system than capitalism.

As mentioned above, Paul wrote this book for a popular audience, and it is written in a very accessible style, with enough wit and humor to keep the reader engaged. Paul also includes a number of personal anecdotes to add human interest. But don’t let the readability fool you: A great deal of research went into the book, and the more than 500 endnotes attest to this fact.

The Case Against Socialism is a great primer for anyone who wants to have a better understanding of this dangerous ideology, and a great gift for friends or relatives who may be enamored by the lies of the Left.

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