



From the Editor

It's Freeeee!

The promises of socialism certainly sound appealing. After all, given a choice between getting something for nothing or having to pay for it, who could possibly be against getting it for free — particularly if we need it and would not be able to afford it otherwise?

Consider the high cost of getting a college education in America today. Many cannot afford the cost, and many have accumulated huge amounts of student debt to pay for tuition, room and board, etc. Yet the nation's public schools provide a free education for kindergartners through 12th graders. If public-school education can be free, why can't college education also be free? And how about making vocational schools free as well for those who want to learn a trade? By making education free, would we not be investing in America's future?

Then there's the spiraling cost of healthcare. Without insurance, being seriously injured in an automobile accident could result in insurmountable medical bills. Shouldn't the medical care be free for those who cannot afford to pay for it?

But why stop there? The dwellings we live in, the energy we consume, and the food we eat all cost money. Couldn't these human needs also be made free, at least for those in need?

In truth, nothing is free. If it were otherwise, government could print and then equitably distribute virtually unlimited sums of money, making each and every one of us rich — or super-rich. In an Alice-in-Wonderland world, perhaps. But not in the real world.

In the real world, the only way a socialist government can provide "free" goods and services to some is to take from others. Government can redistribute the wealth, but government cannot create wealth out of nothing. Yes, government can print more money. But the more money it prints, the less the money will buy, in much the same way that handing out "free" money to players in a Monopoly game will cause the bids for properties to go up.

Socialists say that we can get a free college education, Medicare for All, etc., by taxing the rich. Karl Marx put it this way in an oft-quoted maxim: "From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs."

Socialists say that this is only fair. But is it really? Is it fair for one person to steal money from another so long as the victim is rich and the robber gives all or some of his money to the poor? And is it different if the government does it? This question of fairness is examined in detail in the cover story in this special report on socialism.

Another promise of socialism is that it works — that it is a boon for humankind. Yet both reason and history inform us otherwise, as we show in other articles in this special report.

One of the reasons for the failures of socialism documented in these pages is that it destroys the incentive to produce wealth. Another reason is that government cannot redistribute the nation's wealth, reallocate its resources, and run its economy without acquiring massive power, and this power can have a very corrupting influence on those entrusted to administer it.

But there is another reason, too, that must not be overlooked: Despite the good intentions of many



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socialists who really want to benefit humankind, there are others who recognize that they can amass political and economic power by promising to use the power of government to give the people what they want — and then delivering tyranny instead. Such was the case with Hitler, the leader of Germany's National Socialists (Nazis), who came to power democratically.

Socialism is a big subject, and most of what is said about it these days is favorable. For these reasons, we have devoted this entire issue of TNA to the subject. Memes may capture attention, but the subject is also deserving of thoughtful analysis. We therefore ask that you, the reader, carefully consider the case against socialism — a case that you may never have been exposed to previously.

— Gary Benoit



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