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Socialism Is Unbiblical

by Bill Lockwood

Basically defined, socialism means the community ownership of property. (Vergilius Ferm, *Encyclopedia of Religion*). Robert Daniels, in a Socialist journal, said, "I take as my general working definition of socialism, 'any theory or practice of social control over economic activity'" (quoted in J.D. Bales, *What Is Socialism?*). There are many reasons therefore why socialism as a political theory is *unbiblical*. Benjamin Morris in his landmark book on *The Christian Life and Character of the Civil Institutions of the United States* used the term "political atheism." Socialism as a political theory is unbiblical. How is this the case?

First, Socialism is actually "legalized plunder." God Himself recognizes the right of individuals to own and utilize *private property*. Biblical injunctions abound against theft (Exodus 20:15, et. al.). The case is not altered if it is a nation that steals property with one fell swoop of the sword, or by incrementally taxing its citizens into poverty. Private property is, according to John Adams, the cornerstone of our liberty. "The moment the idea is admitted into society that property is not as sacred as the laws of God...tyranny commences." God gives men "private" property. On the other hand, Socialism demands "community ownership" of property—or property for the "collective." Confiscation of property or money must first occur before redistribution is made by government planners. "The seductive lure of socialism today causes many among us to demand that government be **generous** rather than **just**, that it should extend **welfare** rather than **freedom** under which each citizen may improve himself through his own labor and initiative" (H.L. Hunt, *Fabians Fight Freedom*, p. 153).

Second, Socialism replaces God with the all-powerful State. God created each individual with personal value in that they are framed in the image of God (Genesis 1:27) and are possessors of "inalienable rights." Our Constitutional system recognizes that government is only enacted to "protect" these God-given rights. However, the nature of Socialism demands an all-powerful state since the state now has a total lien on the property and energies of the people. Any power that takes in hand to "redistribute wealth" becomes the final arbiter of what is needed and an appeal by citizens to God or God-bequeathed rights is pointless. Such ideas as personal freedom (2 Corinthians 3:17 "Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is *liberty!*") and God-granted rights can scarcely be imagined in such a system.

Third, Socialism misconceives the nature of man. The nature of man, according to God, is sinful by practice (Romans 3:23). Our Founders recognized this. Thomas Jefferson exclaimed of politicians, "bind him down from mischief by the chains of the Constitution." Socialistic theory, however, is atheistic in its view of man in that it believes in the perfection of man through a planned Utopia. All that is necessary are the right people to be placed on top to manage the rest of us (Ferm, *Encyclopedia*, 720). Oscar Jaszi, the famed Hungarian social scientist and politician, noted that socialists insist that the "immorality of the established order is traceable

NOT to the ...nature of man, but to 'corrupt institutions.'" Therefore, socialism always seeks to transform the *institutions of society* because they are somehow "unjust." Further, socialism implies that the nature of man is shaped by the economic system. Therefore, if one changes the economic system from private ownership to the collective state ownership, the nature of man will be changed (Bales, p. 7).

Fourth, Socialism is conceived in deception. Envy (feeling of displeasure at the prosperity of others) is condemned in the Bible (Titus 3:3). Here socialism *also* "preaches" against it, all the while "enshrining envy." For instance, masses cheer when government promises to take from the "haves and give to the have nots." People are taught to "demand benefits" from the government—but those goods actually were produced by the labor of others. Socialism transforms services that others work to provide (such as health care) into a "right" that all individuals own. It is plain deception to refer to "services" and "goods" as "rights" owed to each individual.

It is indeed sad to see some Americans reject the biblical model of man and the world for a "mess of pottage" (Genesis 25:30) called socialism. As Walter Lippmann stated, "We have renounced the wisdom of the ages to embrace the errors the ages have discarded..."